IPI faces payroll delay again due to funding challenges. PAGE 2
Torres approves 30K for Rotary's accessible ramp project. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH (OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR)

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres is joined by CNMI Disability Network Partners, advocates, and members of the community yesterday at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort during a proclamation signing that designates March 2022 as Developmental Disabilities and Employment Awareness Month. The occasion was also attended by CNMI Council of Developmental Disabilities executive director Pamela C. Sablan, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation executive director Arlene M. Reyes, Northern Marianas College's University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities program manager Elieen Babauta, Center for Living Independently CNMI executive director Susan Satur, and Northern Marianas executive director Gregory P. Borja. **Story on Page 2**

www.saipantribune.com
WEDNESDAY MARCH 16, 2022
Volume XXXII, Issue No. 53
www.facebook.com/saipantribune

AT A GLANCE

As of 6:38pm, March 15, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Additional Dose Vaccinated: 58.3%

Days since last community transmission 2

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	38,011
Fully Vaccinated:	37,220
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,345
Fully Vaccinated:	5,208
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,149
Additional Dose:	21,747

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	46,411	117	46,528
Recovered	44,270	10	44,280
Active	1,792	117	1,909
Deaths	338	1	339

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	10,379	93	10,472
Recovered	10,094	154	10,248
Active	100	93	193
Deaths	30	1	31

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

Another local stimulus soon

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said Friday he does not prefer to give fuel vouchers but is instead planning to release another round of local stimulus funds using the American Rescue Plan Act funding.

» Torres prefers stimulus than giving gas vouchers

Torres

In response to questions during a radio news briefing, Torres said the community should be expecting additional assistance and that it would be more than $500.

He said he and Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig have been talking about the additional assistance many times. The governor said there is an audit report on American Rescue Plan Act funding that needs to be done by April 2022 and that's when they'll be able to determine how much to give out.

See STIMULUS on Page 4

First fuel price rollback of 2022

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After weeks of gradual increases that saw gas prices on Saipan creeping past the $6 mark, the CNMI saw its first fuel price rollback of the year yesterday, with local oil companies reducing prices

See FIRST on Page 4

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA
A motorist takes advantage of the lower gas prices by filling up yesterday.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

NMI records 31st COVID-19-related death

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. have confirmed the CNMI's 31st COVID-19-related death.

As of March 14, 2022, there are four individuals hospitalized as a result of COVID-19. Two are unvaccinatedand two are fully vaccinated.

Also, 93 more individuals have been confirmed positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI total to 10,472 cases since March 28, 2020.

Of the 93 cases, 24 were identified on March 13, 2022 (four on Tinian); 15 were identified on March 12, 2022; and 54 were identified

See NMI on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Puerto Rico exits bankruptcy, completing the largest public debt restructuring in U.S. history.
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NATION
Authorities have launched an urgent search for a gunman who has been stalking homeless men.
Page 12

WORLD
A narrow diplomatic path stays open as Ukraine and Russia plan another round of talks.
Page 13

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https://tagaplus.saipantribune.com/

Local

IPI faces payroll delay again due to funding challenges

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Casino operator Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC is now delayed by two payrolls due to continued funding challenges.

As this developed, IPI's chief engineer Eric Poon has resigned effective Monday after working with the company for six years.

When asked why he resigned, Poon replied: "Family reasons. I want to live closer to my son [who is living in the U.S. mainland]."

» Poon resigns as IPI's chief engineer

The IPI management notified their active employees last Thursday that the payroll covering Feb. 21 to March 6 will be delayed until further notice.

The management, through a memorandum, also informed employees that the payroll covering Feb. 7 to 20 is extended.

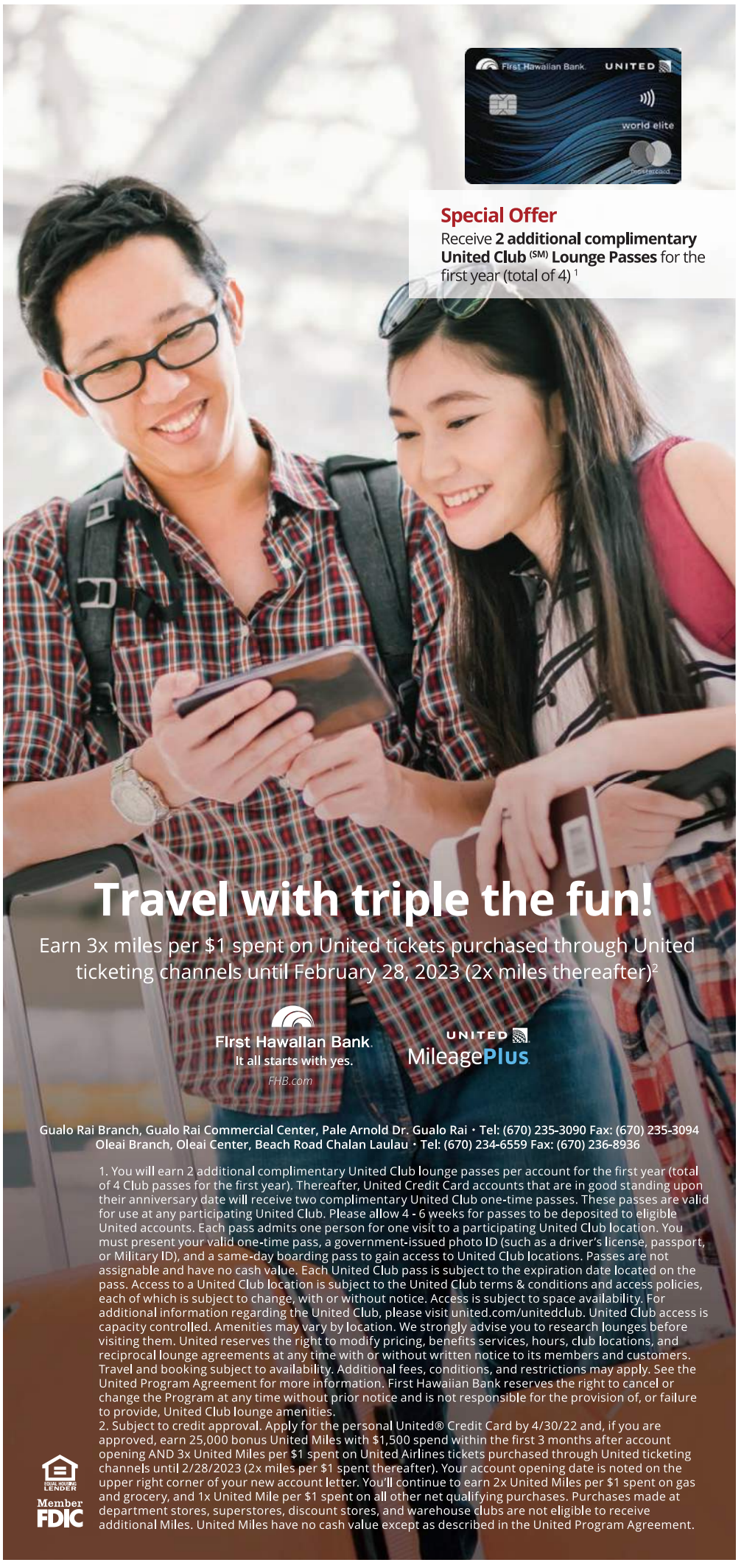
Poon

One of the affected employee confirmed with Saipan Tribune that they are owed two payrolls as of yesterday. The employee said he is still verifying whether 40 active employees, including Poon, are affected by the delay.

IPI said the challenges of funding remains and the financial hardships for the company since the closure of Imperial Pacific Resort in Garapan continues.

IPI said the search to find resources to cure these delays is their top priority.

"Updates will be broadcasted when developments are made. We send our sincerest apologies to you for this inconvenience," IPI said.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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER
Member FDIC

'With inclusion comes success'

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, second from left, signs the proclamation designating March 2022 as Developmental Disabilities and Employment Awareness Month during a ceremony at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort in the presence of advocates and supporters.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has designated the month of March as Developmental Disabilities and Employment Awareness Month during a proclamation signing yesterday at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort.

The occasion was attended by representatives, officials, and advocates of the CNMI Council of Developmental Disabilities, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Center for Living Independently CNMI, Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc.—collectively known as the CNMI Disability Network Partners.

This month's celebration has the theme "Worlds Imagined."

The proclamation recognizes that a talented pool of individuals with developmental or other disabilities in the CNMI is waiting to be tapped and that the CNMI is stronger when people of all abilities are included in community life and in the workplace.

"When people with developmental and other disabilities are included in the workforce, they have the opportunity to earn a competitive wage and to work as part of a team. People with developmental and other disabilities who are included and active in the communities are more likely to give back to their communities.

"Even to this day in the year 2022, we are presented with a number of barriers or challenges that prevent people with developmental and other disabilities from reaching their full and maximum potential in our community including the workplace. We join our U.S. program counterparts in acknowledging the adverse impact that attitudinal barriers play not only in the lives of people with developmental and other disabilities, but in our communities as well. Despite this reality, the Disability Network Partners are committed to ensuring that we continue on our collective journey towards true unity and diversity.

"During Developmental Disabilities and Employment Awareness Month, we celebrate the many talents and contributions of CNMI workers with disabilities as well as recognize the positive strides that employers have made in ensuring an all-inclusive workplace and culture. This month, please be encouraged to learn more about diversity in the workplace and decide what part you will play in this important effort," the proclamation states.

Torres calls upon the Disability Network Partners, employers, and other community organizations in the CNMI to champion the message that with inclusion comes success. ***(PR/Saipan Tribune)***

Man ordered to self-surrender for violating release conditions again

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI ordered a habitual offender to self-surrender to the Department of Correction for violating his release conditions for the second time.

Chief Judge Ramona Manglona ordered David Muña Sablan to surrender to the Department of Corrections yesterday to serve his sentence for violating his probation, again, by admittedly using methamphetamine on three occasions.

Manglona sentenced Sablan to an imprisonment term of one month. Upon completion of his imprisonment, Sablan will be placed on 32 months of supervised release.

The U.S. Probation Office's petition to revoke Sablan's supervised release stated that the

See MAN on Page 4

Torres approves 30K for Rotary's accessible ramp project

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has agreed to provide funding for a Rotary Club of Saipan project to install accessible ramps in two different locations on Saipan.

Speaking before the Rotary Club of Saipan at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom as guest speaker, Torres told Rotary members that he will be approving the appropriation of $30,000 from American Rescue Plan Act funding to build accessible ramps for persons with disabilities at Pau Pau Beach in Tanapag and at the Oleai Sports Complex, which will host the Pacific Mini Games in June. This announcement was greeted with applause and cheers.

Torres' announcement was part of his speech where he also spoke and answered questions about projects that are currently ongoing.

As for when the ramp installation project will be finished, Torres hopes "before the Pacific Mini Games so that the community and perhaps even our tourists, athletes, and those that will be going around will be able to use the ramp[s]."

When asked why he approved to fund the project, he replied, "Because it's for everybody. Of course, to assist those with disabilities access to the beach. And, of course, Rotary has done so much work throughout the community and so I know that the proposal is definitely good for everyone."

Rotary Club president Ivan Ilmov thanked Torres for approving the funding. "It is a huge support to the club and a big help for the community. We are a non-profit organization and all funds go back to the community," he said.

As for when the project will begin, Ilmov stated that they will work with Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality for approval on the locations and more details will follow once permits are obtained.

The approval of the accessible ramps came appropriately as the month of March is Developmental Disability Awareness Month. These ramps will fall into accordance of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation.

LEIGH GASES

Gov. Ralph Torres, left, is presented with tokens of appreciation by Rotary Club of Saipan president Ivan Ilmov after being a guest speaker at the meeting yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom.

Deadline looms for environmental graduate scholarship

TOKYO—One of Japan's top universities is offering all-expense-paid graduate school scholarships for college graduates from the three freely associated states who are interested in furthering their careers while helping the Micronesian region respond to challenges such as climate change. Two full-ride scholarships are available for the upcoming academic year at Sophia University's Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies for applicants from the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau.

"This is an opportunity for future leaders in the Micronesia region to earn an MA in Environmental Studies while studying with graduate students from over 50 countries," said professor Anne McDonald of Sophia University.

Each scholarship includes full tuition support, a monthly stipend for living expenses, and the cost of roundtrip travel from a student's home of record to Tokyo, Japan. Travel back to home countries is also available to scholarship holders during their program, to allow them to maintain ties to people and programs. Travel during the scholarship period is funded by the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund.

The graduate school scholarships were established by a partnership between Sophia University, an historic Jesuit university; The Association for Promotion of International Cooperation, a private foundation based in Tokyo that strengthens relations between Japan and the island nations of the Pacific and Caribbean; and the Micronesia Conservation Trust, a Pohnpei-based non-government organization that supports biodiverse conservation and sustainable development in the Micronesia region.

The deadline for submission of complete applications is March 31, 2022. An information session on Zoom will be held this Friday, March 18, at noon in the Marshall Islands (ZOOM INVITE: https://sophia-ac-jp.zoom.us/j/94469831037, Meeting ID: 944 6983 1037, Passcode: 370231)

For more information, contact either MCT at capacity@ourmicronesia.org, or McDonald at Sophia University at annemcdonald@sophia.ac.jp. ***(PR)***

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Lack of port crane at Rota seaport hinders offloading

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A cargo ship carrying essential commodities recently arrived at the Rota Seaport but failed to offload the items from the containers and had to return to Saipan due to lack of a crane at the port, according to Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) Monday.

Manglona

Manglona informed Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Christopher S. Tenorio that the Rota seaport is not equipped with a port crane, which plays a vital role in the day-to-day operations of the port.

Saipan Tribune was still trying to obtain comments from Tenorio as of press time yesterday.

The senator noted in a letter to Tenorio that this was not the first time such an incident affected the island's port operations.

With the millions of dollars being invested in the CNMI by the federal government, he said that now is the time to seek financial assistance in procuring a port crane to ensure the continuous operation of the Rota Seaport.

Manglona said he learned that M/V Mariana made a trip to Rota last Feb. 24 to transport commodities in approximately six or more containers. However, he said, due to lack of a port crane, none of the commodities from the containers were offloaded and had to be returned to Saipan.

Manglona told Saipan Tribune yesterday that some bulk cargoes that were not in the containers were unloaded.

M/V Mariana used to be called M/V Luta.

The senator told Tenorio that when Rota was experiencing continuous power outages many years back, the municipality had to identify funding to ship a port crane from Saipan just to unload the emergency generator that had been shipped over to aid the residents because the seaport was not readily equipped for such an operation.

"I cannot stress the significant concern regarding this matter. As you are aware, the price for commodities on Rota are extremely high for residents due to the additional shipping fees alone," Manglona said.

To further prolong the arrival of commodities at a time when fuel prices are at an all-time high is truly a disadvantage for Rota residents who absorb the financial burden of such costs, he said.

The senator is worried that further delays in addressing this longstanding concern will only impair the livelihood of the community in the event of another crisis.

FIRST

From Page 1

by 20 cents.

After just a few days since hitting the $6 mark—the highest that Saipan has seen in years—Mobil Oil Marianas surprised many in the community with its first rollback.

As of 6pm press time, Shell Marianas had yet to reduce its prices but is expected to reduce its prices today.

Yesterday, Mobil's Extra fuel went down from $6.06 a gallon to $5.86. Mobil also reduced its Supreme fuel from $6.51 to $6.31 a gallon. The local oil company also brought down its diesel prices from $6.53 to $6.33 per gallon.

One local motorist encouraged everyone to gas up while prices are relatively low since the nation is still expecting a significant increase in fuel prices.

"This is probably only a minor relief. President Joe Biden already announced last week that gas prices will only continue to go up, now that the import of Russian oil has been banned," he said.

Another motorist, a 37-year-old woman, said this may be the start of something good.

"I think this will be the start of a steady rollback in prices. I'm hopeful that this is good news for the CNMI and the nation," she said.

Last week, President Joe Biden announced the ban on import of Russian oil as part of the sanctions imposed for the country's invasion of Ukraine weeks ago.

He also openly warned that fuel prices will only continue to increase due to this sanction.

MAN

From Page 2

defendant admitted to using methamphetamine, or "ice," on three separate occasions: Jan. 12, Jan. 22, and Feb. 3, 2022, violating the terms and conditions of his supervised release for the second time.

According to initial court documents, on March 15, 2018, Sablan threw a backpack that was found containing chemicals and items used in manufacturing methamphetamine in Garapan while he was being chased by police.

After opening the backpack, the four responding police officers said they inhaled chemicals that caused them to vomit and also complained of nausea and dizziness as a result of inhaling these chemicals.

Later, Sablan was arrested and after going through the court process, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to the manufacture of methamphetamine.

On April 24, 2019, Sablan was sentenced to three years and five months in prison and was given credit for time served since his arrest. When he finished his sentence, he was placed on three years' supervised release.

Then, in August 2021, Manglona sentenced him to three months in prison for the first time he violated his supervised release.

During his first violation, the U.S. Probation Office told the court that Sablan had tested positive for the use of methamphetamine on June 21, 2021, submitted a diluted urine sample on July 12, 2021, and violated the rules of the location monitoring program on July 10, 2021.

Sablan also tested a presumptive positive for the use of methamphetamine during a random drug test at the U.S. Probation Office on Aug. 2, 2021.

DOL awarded $800K for NMI's humanitarian assistance workers

The U.S. Department of Labor announced yesterday a supplemental award of $800,000 in funds to the CNMI's Department of Labor – Workforce Investment Agency Division to support continued pandemic-related, disaster-relief employment.

Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, this National Dislocated Worker Grant provided an emergency award of $1.5 million in April 2020. The award announced yesterday brings the total project funds awarded to $2.3 million. CNMI DOL will use the funds to continue to support employment for those in humanitarian assistance positions.

The grant is one of 64 grants the U.S. Department of Labor has made to help address the workforce-related impacts of the coronavirus public health emergency. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act provided $345 million for Dislocated Worker Grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

In 2020, emergency declarations issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency enabled the CNMI to request this funding.

National Dislocated Worker Grants expand the service capacity of dislocated worker programs at the state and local levels temporarily by providing assistance in response to unexpected economic events that cause significant job losses. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 supports the grants. ***(PR)***

Prosecution wants court to deny bid to junk case vs woman in New Year's Day stabbing

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The prosecution in the case of a woman who was allegedly involved in the stabbing death of a man on New Year's Day is asking the Superior Court to deny the recent motion to dismiss filed by the defense.

In an eight-page opposition to Lyuqin Yi's motion to dismiss, assistant attorney general Steven Kessel says Yi, the girlfriend of Ling Yang Kong, who is accused of stabbing another man to death, said the information the prosecution has provided is sufficient to allow Yi to adequately prepare her defense and avoid double jeopardy.

"In addition to the language of the statute, the information states the date of the offense, and where the violation occurred. It also alleges the action taken by the defendant, namely that she, knowing Kong had committed the crimes of second-degree murder, assault with a dangerous weapon, and/ or assault and battery, hid a knife [used] in the commission of such crimes," the prosecuting lawyer said.

Kessel also informed the court that the OAG's criminal division also supplemented the information by providing the defense with over 250 pages of discovery materials, and numerous CDs containing photographs, video recordings, and other materials that also established that Yi hid a knife used by Kong in the killing of Songzhi Li.

"Taken together, the information provides sufficient information to allow Yi to adequately prepare her defense and avoid double jeopardy," he said.

Meanwhile, in response to defense counsel Matthew J. Holley's argument that there isn't sufficient evidence to maintain the charge of accessory after the fact against his client, Yi, Kessel explained what "accessory after the fact" means under CNMI law.

"It is defined as 'a person who, knowing that an offense against the Commonwealth has been committed, receives, relieves, comforts, or assists the offender in order to hinder or prevent the offender's apprehension, trial or punishment, is an accessory after the fact,'" Kessel stated.

Yi is charged with accessory after the fact in the killing of Songzhi Li, a man who was allegedly stabbed several times on New Year's Eve by her boyfriend Kong.

According to court documents, the couple was arrested in the early hours of Jan. 1, for their alleged involvement in the stabbing murder of Li.

Kong allegedly stabbed Li multiple times following an altercation between the two that stemmed from an altercation between their girlfriends.

Yi said in an interview that when she saw a pocket knife sticking out from Kong's back pocket, she pulled it out and hid it behind a typhoon shutter near King's Jewelry.

NMI

From Page 1

on March 11, 2022 (six on Tinian). The vaccination statuses of the 93 cases are pending verification.

In Guam, the Joint Information Center was notified that the territory's 339th COVID-19-related fatality was pronounced dead on arrival at the Guam Memorial Hospital on March 14, 2022. The patient was an 87-year-old male, vaccinated with a booster, with underlying health conditions and tested positive on March 14.

"We are saddened that our days of grief and loss have yet to end, especially as today marks two years since we confirmed our first cases of this deadly virus. To his family and friends, [first gentleman] Jeff [Cook], [Lt. Gov.] Josh [Tenorio], and I extend our sympathies and pray you find peace and comfort," said Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero in the JIC news release. "While we are seeing a downward trend in cases and we remain hopeful for brighter days ahead, there are still vulnerable groups in our community who are at risk of severe illness and death. These groups need our extra care and attention. In addition to getting vaccinated and boosted, please continue to wear your mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance."

Of the 10,472 total cases that have been identified in the CNMI, there have been 10,248 recoveries; 193 active cases; and 31 COVID-19-related deaths.

As of March 13, 2022, a total of 9,743 were identified via community testing and 729 via travel testing.

A total of 56 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on March 14, 2022; of the eligible population, 58.2% have received an additional dose. The vaccination rate is calculated using the 2020 Census population estimates for the CNMI and includes the eligible 5-years-old and older population.

A total of 628 COVID-19 tests were conducted on March 11-13, 2022: 533 via Community-Based Testing; 56 at the Koblerville COVID-19 Community Center; and 39 at the Rota Health Center. ***(PR/ Saipan Tribune)***

STIMULUS

From Page 1

"So we will be giving everyone an update on what would be available for our community for another stimulus," he said.

Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) earlier introduced a resolution requesting Torres and Atalig to provide financial assistance to meet the increasing fuel costs in the CNMI by implementing a $500 fuel voucher program.

Separately, Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan) has introduced a bipartisan House joint resolution to endorse the issuance of a new local stimulus payment of $500 per resident and $500 per dependent.

Torres said that giving stimulus gives recipients the freedom to decide where to spend it, including gas, similar to the previous local stimulus funds that were given out.

Torres pointed out that giving gas vouchers will only benefit those with vehicles.

"What happens to those that don't have vehicles? If I give stimulus…whether you have a vehicle or not, you're able to provide for your family," he said.

Torres said a local stimulus would be fairer to everybody who lives in the CNMI.

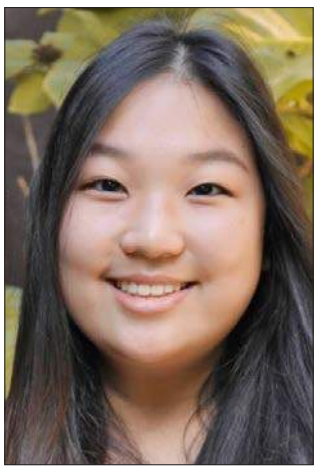
"We're hoping [that it'll be] more than $500. At the end of the day, the more we give to our community, the better it is," he said.

The governor said he can't say right now how much money will be given out and when until Atalig is done with the auditing reporting requirements.

"We'll give what we believe we're able to and safeguarding the priorities as well. So that approach will be the same for the next stimulus as well," he said.

7 to represent the NMI at National 4-H conference

Yalung


Bang

Manglona

Dela Cruz

Surla

Coloma

Nuera

Seven high schoolers from the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will be headed to Washington D.C. this month to represent the Northern Mariana Islands at this year's National 4-H Conference.

The seven are Rownel Jody Coloma, Judy Bang, Rosabelle Surla, Jermaine Chloe Yalung, Kate Manglona, Ryan Nuera, and Remedio Dela Cruz.

Five of the seven recipients were able to secure a scholarship from New Mexico State University in collaboration with National Institute of Food and Agriculture, while the remaining two were selected through a competitive process by the Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services.

The National 4-H Conference gives youth an opportunity to travel to Washington D.C., network with other youth leaders from across the country, engage with federal agency staff and leaders, tour federal buildings, and learn more about 4-H.

Surla, a Marianas High School student, said that she is very grateful for this opportunity. "I get to represent my community, the Northern Mariana Islands, in a place much larger than ours," Surla said. "I am also excited to be able to share more memories with my fellow 4-H family."

Yalung, a Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./Sr. High School student, is excited to encounter the countless memories, viewpoints, and growth that will come as a result of this experience. "Living in the CNMI has left me closed off from the workings of the world beyond my island home. By pursuing this opportunity, I am empowered to educate myself and grow immensely in both my personal and professional life," Yalung said.

The Northern Marianas College Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services' Family, Community, and Youth Development and 4-H Marianas sent the first delegation of CNMI youth to the National 4-H Conference in 2019.

Youth who attended the N4-HC were able to interact with youth from across the U.S. mainland and other U.S. territories. They were also able to visit their congressional office and present to federal agencies on topics that are affecting the youth across the US.

At the conference, the students will be able to acquire practical knowledge and skills that reinforce the attitudes and motivation to give them a heightened sense of responsibility and capacity to connect as active members of their communities, country and world.

They will also be able to engage in educational activities to explore, practice, develop and master skills and knowledge in civic engagement, civic education and personal development.

Nuera, a student of Tinian Jr./Sr. High School, said that this opportunity will help him personally and professionally. "I will use the knowledge that [I will] I learn from the conference and try to apply these skills…in my everyday life and in my island and school settings," Nuera said. "I will try to apply it to my everyday surroundings and will also try my best to teach it to the youth around me."

Coloma, another recipient from Marianas High School, is honored to be able to represent the CNMI. "I am excited to work alongside 4-Hers across the nation to further expand our civic engagement and share our thoughts on various topics to federal agencies on Capitol Hill," Coloma said.

For more information or to join 4-H Marianas, contact Robert Suzuki, Jr. (Saipan) at (670) 237-6845, Joan Flores (Tinian) at (670) 433-9235, or Tonica Barcinas (Rota) at (670) 783-1802. ***(PR)***

HOPE Recovery Center cleared of munitions following TCRA

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres announced Monday the safe completion of the interim removal action of hazardous munitions at the CNMI Substance Abuse, Addiction, and Rehabilitation Program's HOPE Recovery Center in Marpi, made possible through the coordinated efforts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, HydroGeoLogic, the HOPE Recovery Center staff, and CNMI government departments and agencies.

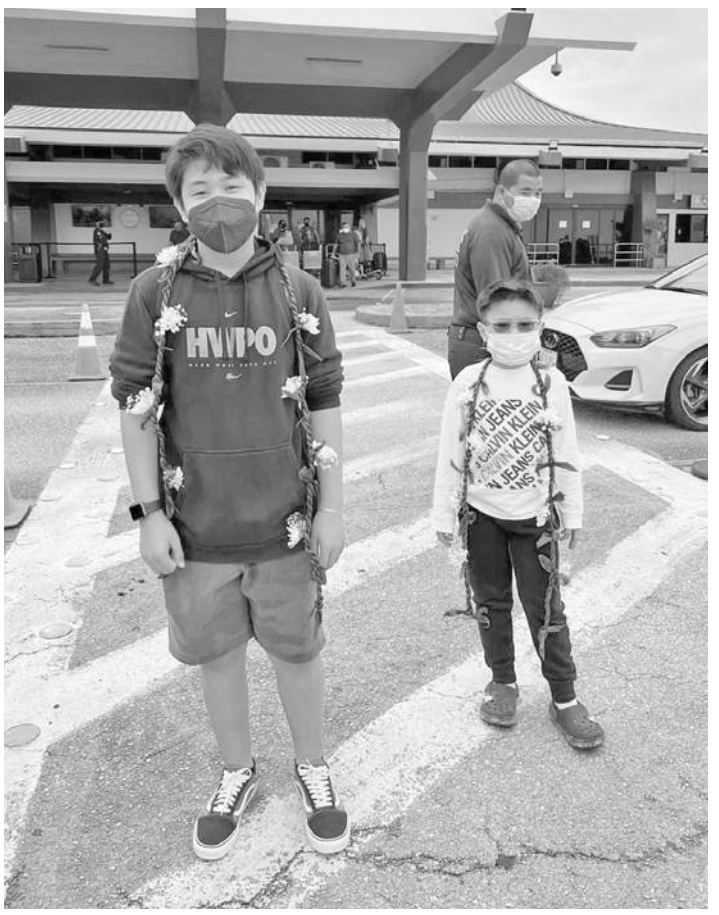
In 2017, the USACE conducted surface assessments throughout the HOPE compound, and it was apparent that anomalies were present in plain sight. After joining in discussions regarding the ordnance present at the HOPE compound, and learning that the larger ordnance removal project would be completed in 2035, SAAR, through the assistance of local departments and agencies, requested for the prioritization of the HOPE Compound ordnance removal through a Time Critical Removal Action in February 2020. This project, through the TCRA, officially started in October 2021, and then completed in February 2022.

Torres is grateful for this collaboration. "I want to thank our local government departments and agencies involved in this project, and especially the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who have guided this project to its completion. Thank you for your partnership in addressing the issue of munitions that were left here on this land decades ago. The CNMI is thankful for the timely response, prioritization, and completion of this project, so that the critical functions and services of our HOPE Recovery Center can safely continue for our community," said Torres.

Lt. Col. Eric Marshall, commander of the Honolulu District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, stated that HydroGeoLogic found within the 14 acres of land on the HOPE compound almost 2,000 munitions and explosives of concern, which posed a threat to the residents and staff of the HOPE Recovery Center. Additionally, almost 76,000 lbs of debris of any type were able to be remediated and moved to recycling, following the first ever TCRA for the CNMI. He conveyed the importance of the HOPE Recovery Center being able to move into its next stages, through Torres' vision and the work of SAAR special assistant Yvette R. Sablan and the HOPE Recovery Center staff.

Sablan expressed her appreciation for Marshall and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "I deeply appreciate that you recognized and shared with me that, while this land held a history of a battle, it is nice to see that it is now being used to bring healing to its people. This whole project signifies the work that we do up here at the HOPE Recovery Center. We, too, cannot do this work alone. And we, too, need our partners."

"What an honor for this administration, under the leadership of our [Torres], the HOPE Recovery team, and for everyone here to have witnessed and be a part of a history that will tell a story of healing: that of our land and of its people—and that of a relationship with our military partners that brought us healing," added Sablan. ***(PR)***



TOP SPELLERS

Congratulations and welcome back to Sean Troy Mateo and Maverick Lo Yamanaka, who were the representatives of the Northern Marianas International School at the recently concluded 2022 Scripps Regional Spelling Bee Competition held at the Tiyan High School in Guam last Saturday, March 12, 2022. With Mateo as the Primary Speller and Yamanaka as the Alternate Speller, the two were accompanied by their proud parents and William "Bill" Matson in Guam. After competing with 39 other students from the CNMI and Guam, Mateo won first runner up honors. Thank you, NMIS family for the full support and thank you, CNMI-PSS, for the opportunity.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ninth Circuit extends civics contest deadline

SAN FRANCISCO—It's not too late for students to get their essay and/or video entries submitted. Deadline has been extended to submit entries for the 2022 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, an essay and video competition for high school students sponsored by the federal courts of the western United States. Entries must be received by 11:59pm Pacific Time on March 28, 2022.

"The First Amendment and the Schoolhouse Gate: Students' Free Speech Rights" is the theme of this year's contest. The contest asks students to address "What are students' free speech rights—and responsibilities—on and off campus?" Participants are asked to consider what rights the First Amendment provides to students engaging in free speech, both inside and outside of school. Participants also should consider the responsibilities, if any, that students, schools, or the government have with respect to speech by students, including whether it may cause harm to others.

Students in grades 9-12 in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington state, the U.S. territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands may participate in the contest.

First-place winners of the essay and video portion of the contest at the circuit level will be invited to attend the 2022 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in Big Sky, Montana. A total of $11,400 in cash prizes will be awarded in the circuit-wide contest. The top three finishers in both the essay and video competitions will receive a total of $3,000 for first place, $1,700 for second place and $1,000 for third place. Many students also have a chance to win cash prizes in local competitions sponsored by the individual judicial districts that will select their finalists for the circuit-wide contest.

The contest is sponsored by the Ninth Circuit's Public Information and Community Outreach Committee, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and the U.S. district and bankruptcy courts in the 15 judicial districts that comprise the Ninth Circuit. For more information, visit https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civics-contest. Finalists will be announced in May and the winners in June. ***(PR)***

CNMI is awarded $341K under Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program

The Commonwealth has been chosen to receive $341,055 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs throughout the Commonwealth.

The selection was made by a national board that is chaired by the U. S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and consists of representatives from American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; The Jewish Federations of North America; The Salvation Army; and United Way Worldwide.

A CNMI board, made up of local community stakeholders, will determine how the funds awarded to the CNMI are to be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies.

The local board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds (Phase39) and any additional funds (ARPA-R) allocated under this program.

Under the terms of the grant from the national board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must: 1) be private voluntary nonprofits or units of government, 2) be eligible to receive federal funds, 3) have an accounting system, 4) practice nondiscrimination, 5) have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs, and 6) if they are a private voluntary organization, have a voluntary board. Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

The NMI EFSP board recently distributed emergency food and shelter funds to Karidat Social Services, The Salvation Army, Empty Vessel Ministries, Team Koka (Tinian), The Ohala Foundation (Tinian), and Marianas Food Bank. These agencies were responsible for providing thousands of meals and hundreds of nights of lodging and utility assistance. Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds should contact local board chair John Hirsh at John.Hirsh@redcross.org or 670-234-3459 for more information. The deadline for applications to be received is 5pm on Monday March 28, 2022. ***(PR)***

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Max Investments, LLC

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Max Investments, LLC is proposing to amend its approved Conditional Use Permit File No. 2020-2595 to construct a second Grow Shed measuring 19'(L) x 32'(W) and to also construct a Dry Room measuring 20'(L) x 20'(W). The applicant is also proposing to convert the approved existing Office Space into its Mother Room and Clone/Veggie Room for its "Cannabis Farm" Use. This use is permitted in the area as a conditional use. The site is located on Lot No. 502 New-3-5 in the village of Dandan. This area is zoned as Rural.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: **March 18, 2022**
Time: **5:00 pm**
Place: **Fiesta Hall, Grandvrio Resort, Saipan**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, March 17, 2022. Please send written comments via e-mail to zoningboard@cnmizoning.com. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Perry Inos, Jr., Chairman

Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting

March 18, 2022 | 5:00 PM
Fiesta Hall, Grandvrio Resort, Saipan
Tel: 234-9661/2 • Fax: 234-9666
www.cnmizoning.com

AGENDA

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of 03/18/2022 Meeting Agenda
4. Public Comments (not for items to be discussed in item B. Public Hearings)

B. Public Hearings:
1. Conditional Use Application #2020-11126 – Max Investments, LLC is proposing to amend its approved Conditional Use Permit File No. 2020-2595 to construct a second Grow Shed measuring 19' (L) x 32' (W) and to also construct a Dry Room measuring 20' (L) x 20' (W). The applicant is also proposing to convert the approved existing Office Space into its Mother Room and Clone/Vegging Room for its "Cannabis Farm" Use. This use is permitted in the area as a conditional use. The site is located on Lot No. 502 New-3-5 in the village of Dandan. This area is zoned as Rural.

C. Old Business
1. AK Toyota Lexus Saipan – Conditional Use Application No. 2020-10382

D. Executive Session

E. Adjournment

In an effort to provide public access to this meeting during this pandemic, the Commonwealth Zoning Board will host this meeting via:

Zoom Video Communications
Meeting Link: https://zoom.us/j/6853007492
Meeting Code: 685 300 7492

Bank of Guam video wins 2022 Gold Ava Digital Award

HAGÅTNA, Guam—Bank of Guam announced yesterday they've been awarded Gold honors by the 2022 International AVA Digital Awards for Corporate Social Responsibility Messaging.

» Corporate Social Responsibility video honoring founder receives top honors

Their video, Founder's Day of Giving, highlights the spirit of their founder, Jesus S. Leon Guerrero, as employees and community partners come together for a day of goodwill and service throughout the communities they serve.

"We continue to be humbled by the recognition earned on the international stage particularly in relation to our first Founder's Day of Giving. It's an honor to showcase the energy and collaboration of our branches employees, neighbors, and partners as they come together on one day for a singular purpose to make a difference and honor the legacy of our founder," said Jackie Marati, senior vice president and chief Corporate Social Responsibility officer,

"Our winning video is the celebration of our founder, our people, and our communities. In an era of digital communication, we're honored, most especially on our 50th anniversary to be recognized for creating heartfelt meaningful impact not just with our words but also through

action. We truly are proud to be The People's Bank," said Joaquin P. LG. Cook, Bank of Guam president and chief executive officer.

AVA Digital Awards honors excellence in digital communication and is administered and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, an international organization that recognizes outstanding work by professionals involved in the concept, direction design, and production of media that is part of the evolution of digital communication.

Bank of Guam celebrated its 50th anniversary last March 13. To commemorate the historic date, the bank unveiled their commemorative emblem in a lighting ceremony, illuminating their Hagâtna headquarters in their signature green and golden 50th emblem featuring their esteemed, forward-looking mascot, Juan.

View Bank of Guam's Founder's Day video here.

APIA awards $5,000 in scholarships to 2 GCC students

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Asian & Pacific Islander Americans Scholars has awarded two full-time Guam Community College students with scholarships totaling $5,000. Each received $2,500 toward their studies at GCC. Present at the check presentation were, from left, GCC Foundation board of governors chair Lorraine Okada, Aira May Ngalongalo, McEllie Garcia, and GCC president Dr. Mary Okada.

MANGILAO, Guam—The Asian & Pacific Islander Americans Scholars had awarded two full-time Guam Community College students with scholarships totaling $5,000. Each received $2,500.

McEllie Garcia is working on her associate degree in Marketing and Accounting. She is anticipated to graduate in spring 2022.

"I am highly appreciative of the APIA organization for their generosity. Receiving the scholarship allows me to continue my education as it takes a financial burden off my shoulders," Garcia said. "At the beginning of the semester, I was working three jobs to help support myself and my studies. With the organization's help, I am confident that I will be able to accomplish my future goals," she said.

The second recipient, Aira May Ngalongalo, is no stranger to this scholarship. In spring 2021 she was also awarded the scholarship to help her attain her associate degree in Liberal Studies, Business track. Ngalongalo is anticipated to finish her studies in fall 2022.

"For those that think you don't have the time for college, just know you do have the time. It takes a lot of effort and dedication to do something you would want in your life," said Ngalongalo. "Life is short, so may as well make use of the available time you have now. If you think you can't afford college, there are many opportunities for you to apply, but it's only you that can make the effort if you want it to happen."

In order to qualify for the scholarship, applicants must meet the following requirements: must be U.S. citizens, nationals, or legal permanent residents enrolled in an accredited higher education institution, with a minimum GPA of 2.7, and who have applied for federal financial aid through the FAFSA, or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

APIA Scholars, formerly the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund, is the nation's largest nonprofit provider of college scholarships for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Since 2003, APIASF has distributed more than $80 million in scholarships to AAPI students across the country and in the Pacific Islands. The APIASF Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution Scholarship program is an expansion of the APIASF Community College Scholarship Program. In 2013, a new scholarship opportunity was launched by APIASF in partnership with Guam Community College through the AANAPISI Scholarship Program. The APIASF partnership with AANAPISIs helps provide important access to AAPI students in their pursuit of higher education. ***(PR)***

Name: Kot, Weng Hong
Address: P.O. Box 503160
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: 286-8899
Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition for the Change of Name of: Kot, Weng Hong, Petitioner : FCD CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 22-0094 : NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on July 11, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217A, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 11th day of March, 2022.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

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NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2022-011	CDBG-DR Loan Specialist (1-Position)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00 per annum	March 02, 2022	March 17, 2022 4:00 PM
2022-013	CDBG-DR Project Supervisor (1-Position)	UNGRADED$35,000.00 to $45,000.00 per annum	March 02, 2022	March 17, 2022 4:00 PM
2022-014	CDBG-DR Construction Inspector – Tinian Field Office (1-Position)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00 per annum	March 02, 2022	March 17, 2022 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre- employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ) NMHC RFQ 2022-001

(This is ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

INDEPENDENT COST ESTIMATOR (ICE) CONTRACTOR

Information regarding the ICE contractor services will be available online on March 16, 2022, you may obtain the RFQ information by visiting the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab", or at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com. ***All price quotations shall be submitted on or before March 31, 2022, no later than end of work day.***

Pursuant to NMIAC § 100-60-220 (c)(1), the NMHC is soliciting price quotation from qualified firms to perform ICE for the NMHC's CDBG-DR programs.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

All price quote submissions in response to this RFQ are considered quotes and not proposals or offers, even, if labeled as such. The quoters agree to and are bound by all instructions, procedures and rules of the RFQ.

Inquiries regarding this solicitation must be addressed in writing to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXII, Issue No. 53

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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EDITORIAL

Europe steps up to welcome refugees

Less than two weeks into Russia's invasion, 2 million Ukrainians have fled their country. The stunning number includes 1 million children—"a dark historical first," according to a tweet from UNICEF spokesman James Elder—underscoring the severity of the crisis unfolding from Russian President Vladimir Putin's illegal, immoral war.

This number does not include those displaced by the Russian bombardment who remain in Ukraine. In fact, the refugee exodus would be bigger if more Ukrainians were granted safe passage from the indiscriminate attacks. But for the most part, few humanitarian corridors have been safely established, with negotiations between Russia and Ukraine bogged down on many issues, including on some of Russia's suggested routes: east, into Russia itself, or north, into Belarus, Russia's partner in (possible war) crime.

That goes beyond cynical. It's sinister. Refugees could become prisoners or pawns in Putin's homicidal game of geopolitical chess.

"Why would a Ukrainian who has experienced freedom, who lives in a democracy, give that up to live in an autocratic system?" Melinda Haring, the deputy director of the Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center, rhetorically asked an editorial writer. "That's not a legitimate offer."

Instead, the only legitimate refugee route is west, to relatively safer cities like Lviv that have not yet faced Russian bombardment, or to neighboring nations that have without reservation or condition accepted Ukrainians in an inspiring display of compassion and comradeship to fellow Europeans.

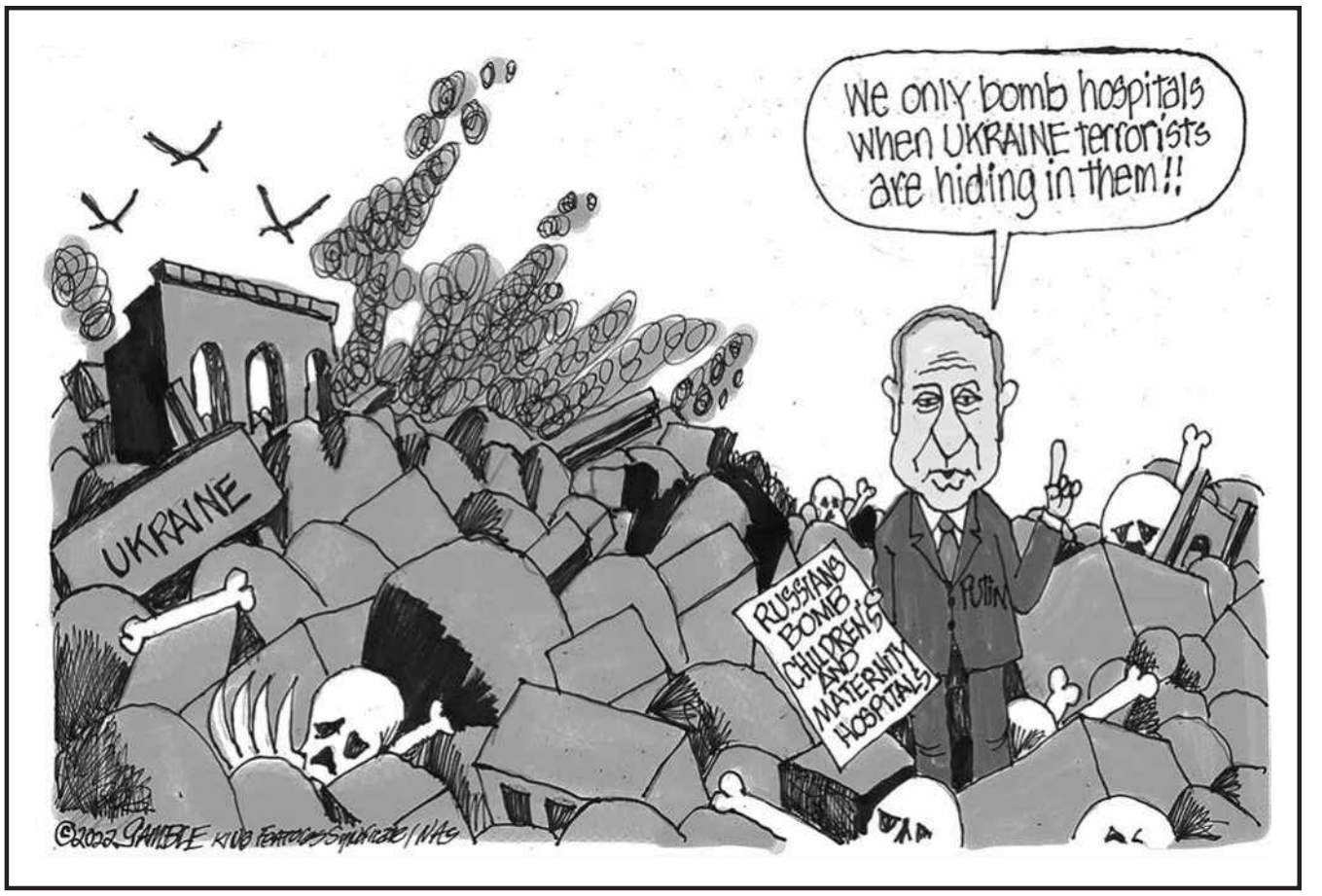
Poland, in particular, has been exemplary, becoming the top destination for Ukrainian refugees, according to the International Organization for Migration. Other bordering countries like Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and even the small nation of Moldova have come up big, too. From there, many Ukrainians have and will continue to stream to other European nations, including Germany, which was so generous in its response to refugees fleeing war-torn Mideast nations—unlike some neighboring nations that were far less welcoming than they are being with Ukrainians.

The IOM reports that among the 2 million refugees are more than 103,000 third-country nationals. Disturbing reports persist, however, of refugees of color denied equal treatment by some Ukrainians desperate to get ethnic nationals out. To the degree this unacceptable practice still exists, it should stop immediately.

Overall, however, "The welcome from the European Union, the neighboring European countries, has been unbelievable; there's been an outpouring of generosity," said Haring, who previously edited the Atlantic Council's "UkraineAlert" blog. "I think it represents the best of Europe. This is an opportunity for Europe to stand up and restate that democracy and human dignity matter."

Russia is part of Europe, too. But its tactics are "reminiscent of medieval siege warfare, encircling cities, cutting off escape routes and pounding the civilian population

See EUROPE on Next Page


We only bomb hospitals when UKRAINE terrorists are hiding in them!!
UKRAINE
RUSSIANS BOMB CHILDREN'S AND MATERNITY HOSPITALS
PUTIN

China wanted to appear neutral between Russia and Ukraine. It isn't

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for The Los Angeles Times. *Readers may send him email at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com*

When Russia invaded Ukraine last month, a spate of wishful thinking ran through the West that China, a great power with friends on both sides, might step in to mediate a cease-fire.

China's government struck a pose of neutrality, called for a peaceful resolution and said it supported the principle of "territorial integrity." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made a public plea to China's Xi Jinping to intervene.

But Xi has been missing in action — and in practice, his policies have been far less neutral than advertised.

China hasn't condemned the invasion and initially didn't even call it a war. It still hasn't acknowledged which country's tanks crossed the other's borders.

Xi has talked by telephone with Russian President Vladimir Putin, but he hasn't talked with Zelenskyy.

"China supports Russia in resolving the issue through negotiation," China's official summary of the Xi-Putin call said.

Last week, China's foreign minister called Russia his country's "most important strategic partner" and said their relationship was "ironclad."

Meanwhile, China's Foreign Ministry has endorsed Russian propaganda claims that the U.S. military is running bioweapons laboratories in Ukraine. The charge is false; the U.S. has funded programs to destroy old bioweapons, not produce new ones.

There's a contradiction at the heart of China's foreign policy. China wants to be seen as a neutral power. But the way it calculates its interests — giving top priority to reducing the global influence of the United States — makes neutrality on issues involving Russia, its biggest ally, almost impossible.

Less than three weeks before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Xi welcomed Putin at a summit meeting in Beijing and declared that their partnership had "no limits."

"China's policy is based on Xi Jinping's view of China's interests, and he sees the United States as implacably hostile," Bonnie Glaser, a China scholar at the German Marshall Fund, told me. "He sees Russia as his only ally against the United States and the other democracies. ... I don't think China can in any way be neutral."

"At a strategic and diplomatic level, they've clearly leaned toward Russia," agreed Evan Feigenbaum, a former State Department official now at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "It's a deliberate choice."

The war in Ukraine may have "unsettled" China's leaders, but it doesn't appear to have shaken the Xi-Putin partnership, CIA Director William Burns told Congress last week.

China "has invested a lot in the relationship," Burns said. "I don't expect that to change anytime soon."

Still, two big factors limit how far China is willing to lean in Russia's direction.

Economics is the first: China's prosperity depends on global trade, not trade with Russia, so it wants to avoid running afoul of the massive sanctions the U.S. and its allies have put in place against Moscow.

Last week, Russian officials reported that China had turned down an emergency request for aircraft parts, apparently to maintain Chinese access to Western suppliers like Boeing and Airbus.

But on a less visible level, Chinese banks are working with Russian banks to use China's UnionPay to replace Visa and Mastercard, shut down by sanctions.

The pattern, Feigenbaum said, is an attempt to "straddle" the sanctions: complying where necessary, but still looking for opportunities to make deals with Russia.

A second limit involves China's desire to maintain a good relationship with Europe, where most countries have been quick to support Ukraine.

"There's a potential for China's relationship with the European Union to get much worse," Feigenbaum said. "China may want to avoid that."

One limit that hasn't seemed to affect China's policies, though, is Beijing's long-standing adherence to principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. "They have essentially jettisoned those principles," Feigenbaum said.

For all those reasons, the idea that China might serve as a neutral mediator to help end the war never had much of a chance.

In any case, it probably wasn't very workable. China's diplomats have little experience mediating international disputes, least of all in Europe.

And while officials from Ukraine and Russia have met three times, their positions have been too far apart to produce even a temporary cease-fire.

Several international leaders have offered their services as mediators — France's Emmanuel Macron, Israel's Naftali Bennett, Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan — without success. Putin appears intent on pursuing his military offensive as far as he can

See CHINA on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Banning Tchaikovsky won't win the war in Ukraine

By MARTIN IVENS
Bloomberg Opinion

Martin Ivens was editor of the Sunday Times *from 2013 to 2020 and was formerly its chief political commentator. He is a director of the Times Newspapers board.*

Banning Tchaikovsky is not the way to win a war. Last week, the Cardiff Philharmonic Orchestra removed the composer's popular "1812 Overture" from its forthcoming program due to the invasion of Ukraine. The work noisily celebrates Russian resistance to Napoleon's invasion.

This absurd decision—Tchaikovsky was seen by his nationalist rivals in the 19th century as a westernizer—follows other cultural bans that combine modern cancel culture with old-fashioned war hysteria. One Italian university has even tried to withdraw a course on the great Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

At the outbreak of World War I, the English novelist Graham Greene recorded that anti-German feeling was so fierce that a dachshund was stoned on his local high street. (The U.S. Kennel Club renamed the breed "The Liberty Pup," and the British rebranded German shepherd dogs as "Alsatians," a name which stuck.) Should we now fear for the safety of borzois on the streets of New York and London?

The Cardiff Philharmonic's pusillanimity may seem comical, but the severing of cultural ties to Russia is no laughing matter. Sanctions have a role in degrading Russia's ability to threaten others. A blanket cultural boycott, however, will hurt those we should be helping—the brave artists who stand up to the Kremlin.

We should learn from the mistakes of the past. In the clumsy cultural boycott of South Africa from the 1960s, both the apartheid state and its enemies were subject to censorship. The rules were later softened to allow anti-apartheid artists to work abroad.

Today, cultural and sporting organizations tied to the Russian state should be sanctioned, but innocent individuals should not suffer them. It makes sense to ban Russia's national team from the soccer World Cup. Similarly, it was right to scupper the Formula 1 Grand Prix due to be held in Sochi and kick Russia out of the Eurovision Song Contest. Vladimir Putin should be denied access to any international stage that normalizes his regime.

In London, the Royal Opera House's recent cancellation of a coproduction of "Swan Lake" with the Bolshoi Theater falls into the same category, although it is a hard call. The famous company is used as a showcase for state-sponsored Russian culture. "Our beef is not with the Russian people, but with Putin's regime and the appalling humanitarian consequences of the invasion of Ukraine," says Alex Beard, chief executive officer of the opera house, which employs a wealth of Russian and Ukrainian talent. However, he believes it would be inappropriate to demand that individual artists denounce the invasion, if only for fear of the consequences to their friends and relatives back home. Beard lights up the venue at night in the yellow and blue of the Ukrainian flag.

No tears will be shed, however, for Valery Gergiev, the director of the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, who has been stripped of the directorship of the Edinburgh International Festival and his role as conductor of the Munich Philharmonic. Gergiev staged a victory concert for his patron, Putin, after the annexation of Crimea. In return, the Kremlin has bankrolled the musician's arts empire.

One sporting ban is overdue. Long before the current hostilities, the Russian Olympic team should have been barred from international competition. At the Sunday Times, where I was editor, we helped confirm the existence of an official state doping campaign and yet still the Olympic movement allowed Russian athletes to compete under a flag of convenience. A few weeks ago, the authorities permitted the 15-year-old Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva to compete in the Beijing Winter Games, despite her failing a pre-Games test for performance-enhancing drugs.

And yet, the decision to end official cultural exchanges leaves a bitter taste.

At the height of the Cold War, defections by the great stars of Russian ballet Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov from their touring company were seen as symbolic defeats for the Soviet Union. Young artists and athletes exposed to outside societies and values channeled these in their work.

The British cellist Julian Lloyd Webber recalls one of the greatest Russian practitioners of his art, Mstislav Rostropovich, choosing to play the Czech composer Antonin Dvorak's "Cello Concerto" at the BBC's Promenade Concerts with "tears pouring down his cheeks" after Soviet tanks rolled into Prague in 1968. It "spoke more than words," he says.

Even when relations between East and West went back to a deep freeze after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, exchanges among artists and intellectuals gave encouragement to dissidents on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain.

Brave Russian artists, priests and intellectuals have been the backbone of opposition to the country's autocrats for centuries. The West should be careful not to isolate those who represent the country's conscience.

Russian artistic dissidents didn't just disappear with the publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago in the mid-20th century. Today their works defy the country's ultra-nationalist kleptocracy. Perhaps if a few more Western leaders had seen Andrey Zvyagintsev's film 'Leviathan," released in 2014, they would have better understood the nature of their Kremlin antagonist. "Leviathan," set in the frozen north, was a parable of the Russian state and official Orthodox church, both rotten to the core.

And more than a decade before the current conflict, a bestselling Russian novelist, Vladimir Sorokin, prophesied Putin's ultimate destination. The writer's 2006 novel, "Day of the Oprichnik," describes a dystopian Russia in 2027, with a czar in the Kremlin served by a secret police resembling the brutal bodyguard of Ivan the Terrible. A "Great Russian Wall" separates the country from its Western neighbors. It emerges that the modern Russian language is filled with Chinese expressions, the country manufactures nothing itself, and the czar, readers finally learn, is an underling of Beijing.

Sorokin's works should not be canceled. Rather, they should form part of any international affairs curriculum.

Blocking Africans at the Ukraine border is wrong

By LEONARD GREENE
New York Daily News

Racism knows no boundaries.

If you think bigotry would take a break amid a brutal war with a bully, think again.

Because with as much worldwide sympathy as has been generated by Ukrainians in their battle against the Russian Goliath, there's no escaping the simple fact that they're wrong too.

Not all of them. Just the ones keeping Africans from leaving the country.

Women and children means women and children. It doesn't mean *Ukrainian* women and children. It doesn't mean *white* women and children.

Yet there are reports of African women and children, Black women and children, being stopped at the border, sometimes at gunpoint, forced to stay longer in a country under siege, so that white women and children can flee to safety and escape the deadly rain of missiles and rockets.

"I was begging. The official literally looked me in my eye and said, 'Only Ukrainians, that's all,'" Jessica Orakpo, a Nigerian medical student, said of her attempt to flee Ukraine by bus last week for the Polish border. "That 'If you're Black, you should walk.'"

Over the last 20 years, Ukraine has emerged as a choice destination for African students, especially in medicine-related fields, which are less expensive than classes offered at universities in the United States and Europe.

Orakpo, 22, is one of more than 1.4 million refugees who have fled Ukraine since the start of the Russian invasion, according to the U.N.'s refugee agency. Refugees have fled to Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Belarus.

Orakpo managed to get out on a train to Hungary. But she told the BBC that the ordeal and the racism she experienced at the border made her feel ashamed.

"The Ukrainians are only prioritizing their citizens," Orakpo said. "They don't care. They will push you, they will beat you. If you can make it, you make it. If you don't, you don't.

"This place is not safe," she said. "If your skin is dark you're at a disadvantage."

Videos posted on social media under the hashtag #AfricansinUkraine show Black people getting pushed off trains and dragged off buses in favor of white Ukrainians.

Nigerian student Alexander Somto Orah told Democracy Now that border officials pointed guns at him and other African students when they tried to push their way onto a train in Kyiv that was heading to Poland.

"We started protesting and telling them they have to let us go, that this is rubbish," Orah said. "They take in like a hundred Ukrainians and then take in like two Africans. It doesn't make sense, because there are more Africans there than Ukrainians at the border.

"So we started pushing, and the police cocked their guns and pointed at us and told us that they're going to shoot us."

Ukrainian border authorities have denied the allegations.

Orah eventually made his way to Warsaw and is now helping other students to cross.

I hear the arguments. If I were on a sinking ship and the lifeboat only had room for my family, wouldn't I try to keep everyone else off?

Probably. And, that might be wrong, too. But it's different. How?

I wouldn't be kicking people off the boat because of the color or their skin.

CHINA

From Page 8

before entering serious negotiations.

But China was never neutral to begin with.

And that reflects what may be the most important fact about the new world disorder that Putin's invasion has unleashed:

China's Xi has made a choice. He believes the coming decades will be dominated by confrontations between the United States and China, with Russia as China's sole important ally.

For anyone pondering the parallels between this new period and the Cold War, there's an eerie echo of the Sino-Soviet alliance that once sought to dominate Eurasia — only this time, with China as the senior partner.

EUROPE

From Page 8

with heavy ordnance," said Jonathan Gimblett, a member of Ukraine's legal team pressing the country's case at the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

For its part, Russia said nothing. It didn't show up, unwilling to defend its brutality, which is creating not just Europe's fastest-growing refugee crisis since World War II, but a humanitarian crisis—soon to be a catastrophe—for civilians still trapped in Ukraine without water, heat, medicine, food and often basic shelter.

The West is showing up, however, in an admirable rediscovery of its shared values. Not just in its welcome to refugees, but in its isolation of Putin's regime. On Tuesday, that strategy evolved to include the U.S. banning Russian oil and other energy imports. That necessary decision will inevitably be felt by consumers. But it's a relatively limited wartime sacrifice in the broader struggle between democracy and authoritarianism. And it's a small sacrifice compared to what Ukrainians are going through.

As impressive as the West's response has been, it can always be better. It was encouraging to hear President Joe Biden say Tuesday, "I've made it clear that the United States will share in the responsibility of caring for the refugees so the costs do not fall entirely on the European countries bordering Ukraine."

That's the kind of solidarity needed to respond to a humanitarian crisis—and to help Ukraine defend itself from Russia's invasion.

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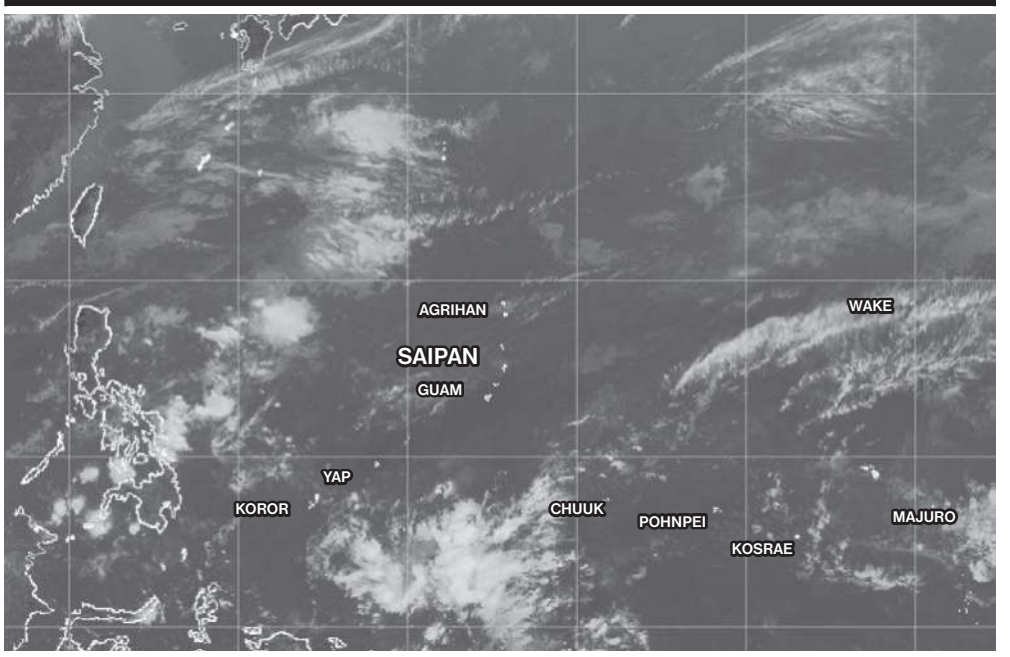
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly sunny with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly sunny with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly sunny with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers
86º 75º	86º 75	87º 76º	85º 75º	85º 75º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:10 AM, TUESDAY, MARCH 145, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Only a few showers and east-trade winds prevail over the Marianas this morning.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	PM Thunderstorms	29 / 25 °F
Palau	Thunderstorms	28 / 25 °F
Yap	Scattered Thunderstorms	30 / 26 °F
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	29 / 26 °F
Pohnpei	Scattered Thunderstorms	30 / 25 °F
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	29 / 27 °F
Majuro	Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:24 AM	18:27 PM
Thursday	06:23 AM	18:27 PM
Friday	06:22 AM	18:27 PM
Saturday	06:22 AM	18:27 PM
Sunday	06:21 AM	18:27 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	04:58 PM	16:43 PM
Thursday	-	05:39 PM	17:36 PM
Friday	-	06:19 PM	18:29 PM
Saturday	-	06:58 PM	19:23 PM
Sunday	-	07:37 PM	20:17 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	24 / 14 °F
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	14 / 2 °F
Hong Kong	Cloudy	24 / 21 °F
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	28 / 22 °F
London	Rain	13 / 2 °F
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	25 / 12 °F
Manila	Thunderstorms	18 / 10 °F
Melbourne	AM Light Rain	21 / 10 °F
Miami	Partly Cloudy	20 / 9 °F
New York	Mostly Sunny	16 / 8 °F
Osaka	Sunny	20 / 9 °F
Paris	Mostly Sunny	21 / 10 °F
Busan	Mostly Sunny	18 / 10 °F
Rome	Mostly Sunny	19 / 6 °F
Salem	Thunderstorms	20 / 10 °F
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	17 / 9 °F
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	15 / 3 °F
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	20 / 8 °F
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	21 / 10 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:31 AM	Low Tide	-0.07
07:27 AM	High Tide	1.71
1:01 PM	Low Tide	0.93
6:12 PM	High Tide	1.71

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $234. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1, 3, 5
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	4, 7
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA116	8:00am	8:46am	7
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2, 4, 7
UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/116	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 7 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	8:46am+1	6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9307	9:00AM	Q2:30PM	4, 7
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Russian airlines will keep planes leased from foreign firms

By DAVID KOENIG
AP AIRLINES WRITER

The fate of hundreds of planes leased by Russian airlines from foreign companies grew murkier Monday after Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law letting the airlines register those planes and continue flying them.

Russian state media said the law will let Russian airlines keep their fleets and operate foreign planes on routes within Russia.

Many of the planes used by Russian airlines are leased from foreign companies, including several in Ireland, a member of the European Union. Last month, the EU banned the sale or leasing of planes to Russia as part of sanctions to punish Russia for invading Ukraine. It gave leasing companies until March 28 to end current contracts in Russia.

Last week, Russia's air-transport agency advised airlines with foreign-registered planes not to take them out of the country because of the risk they could be repossessed.

Separately, sanctions prevent Western companies from providing spare parts and maintenance to Russian airlines, and analysts say it is unclear whether the planes are insured anymore.

Various estimates place the number of foreign-owned planes operated by Russian airlines at around 500 or more, and the vast majority of them were inside Russia when the war started Feb. 24. Aviation consulting firm Ishka estimates that the foreign-owned planes are worth $12 billion, nearly half of that by Irish-based lessors.

"We are in uncharted territory. We don't know if they will see these aircraft again," said Helane Becker, an aviation analyst for financial-services firm Cowen. "Our guess is that (Russian carriers) use up whatever parts they have and then start cannibalizing (parts) to keep aircraft flying, and when this is over everything gets sorted out."

According to aviation consultant IBA, the company with the most exposure to the war is Dublin-based AerCap, with 152 planes valued at nearly $2.4 billion that are flying, parked or stored in Russia or Ukraine.

Puerto Rico exits bankruptcy after grueling debt negotiation

AP

In this July 29, 2015 file photo, the Puerto Rican flag flies in front of Puerto Rico's Capitol as in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—Puerto Rico's government formally exited bankruptcy Tuesday, completing the largest public debt restructuring in U.S. history after announcing nearly seven years ago that it was unable to pay its more than $70 billion debt.

The exit means that the U.S. territory's government will resume payments to bondholders for the first time in several years and will settle some $1 billion worth of claims filed by residents and local businesses.

"This is a significant success," said Natalie Jaresko, executive director of the federal control board that oversees Puerto Rico's finances and its debt restructuring process. "Remaining in bankruptcy has been a drag on the economy in multiple ways."

The bankruptcy led to widely criticized austerity measures on an island that paid some $1 billion in fees to consultants and lawyers and in other expenses during the process.

The exit was a priority for the board and Jaresko, who previously announced she is retiring April 1. A replacement has not been named yet. The board is expected to remain in place until Puerto Rico has four consecutive balanced budgets, a feat that has yet to be achieved.

The debt restructuring plan was approved by a federal judge in January. It reduces claims against Puerto Rico's government from $33 billion to just over $7.4 billion, with 7 cents of every taxpayer dollar going to debt service, compared with 25 cents previously.

"This is a transcendental moment," said Gov. Pedro Pierluisi. "The plan is not perfect ... but it has a lot of good things."

The board has clashed several times with Pierluisi and previous administrations, particularly on a proposal to reduce certain monthly pension benefits that was ultimately scrapped.

The plan also deposits $1.5 billion into public pension systems and creates a pension reserve trust that will be funded with more than $10 billion in upcoming years.

"For decades, past governments have neglected to put aside enough money," Jaresko said.

While many celebrated Puerto Rico's exit from bankruptcy, Jaresko said it is unlikely the island will be able to access financial markets soon because it has yet to get its audited financial statements up to date.

Puerto Rico accumulated more than $70 billion in public debt and more than $50 billion in public pension liabilities through decades of corruption, mismanagement and excessive borrowing. The U.S. Congress created the federal board in 2016, a year after the island's government said it was unable to pay its debt.

In 2017, Puerto Rico's government filed for the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S history. Months later, Hurricane Maria struck, razing the island's power grid and causing billions of dollars in damage.

The island is still trying to recover from the hurricane as well as a series of powerful earthquakes that struck its southern region starting in late 2019. The coronavirus pandemic also has been a serious setback.

Still unresolved are the bankruptcy proceedings for Puerto Rico's Highways and Transportation Authority and the Electric Power Company, which owes nearly $9 billion, the largest debt of any government agency.

Trial over approval of Boy Scouts bankruptcy plan begins

DOVER, Del. (AP)—More than two years after the Boy Scouts of America sought bankruptcy protection amid an onslaught of child sex abuse allegations, a judge began a trial Monday to determine whether to confirm its proposed reorganization plan.

The trial in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware is expected to stretch over several weeks as attorneys and witnesses battle over complex issues. They include insurance rights, liability releases, the value of some 80,000 child sex abuse claims and how such a huge number of claims came to be filed.

The Boy Scouts, based in Irving, Texas, sought bankruptcy protection in February 2020 in an effort to halt hundreds of individual lawsuits and create a fund for men who say they were sexually abused as children involved in Scouting. Although the organization faced 275 lawsuits at the time, it found itself the subject of more than 82,000 sexual abuse claims in the bankruptcy case.

The reorganization plan calls for the Boys Scouts and its roughly 250 local councils to contribute up to $786 million in cash and property and assign certain insurance rights to a fund for abuse claimants. In return, they would be released from further liability.

The BSA's two largest insurers, Century Indemnity Co. and The Hartford, would contribute $800 million and $787 million, respectively, into the compensation fund. Other insurers have agreed to contribute about $69 million. The organization's former largest troop sponsor, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known as the Mormon church, would contribute $250 million for abuse claims involving the church. Congregations affiliated with the United Methodist Church have agreed to contribute $30 million.

The troop-sponsoring organizations and settling insurers also would be released from further liability in exchange for their contributions.

Once a powerful symbol in Russia, McDonald's withdraws

AP

People walk past Moscow's first McDonald's a day before its opening, in Moscow's Pushkin Square, Jan. 30, 1990.

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP BUSINESS WRITER

Two months after the Berlin Wall fell, another powerful symbol opened its doors in the middle of Moscow: a gleaming new McDonald's.

It was the first American fast-food restaurant to enter the Soviet Union, reflecting the new political openness of the era. For Vlad Vexler, who as a 9-year-old waited in a two-hour line to enter the restaurant near Moscow's Pushkin Square on its opening day in January 1990, it was a gateway to the utopia he imagined the West to be.

"We thought that life there was magical and there were no problems," Vexler said.

So it was all the more poignant for Vexler when McDonald's announced it would temporarily close that store and nearly 850 others in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. McDonald's Russian website on Monday read: "Due to operational, technical and logistical difficulties, McDonald's will temporarily suspend service at its network enterprises from March 14."

"That McDonald's is a sign of optimism that in the end didn't materialize," said Vexler, a political philosopher and author who now lives in London. "Now that Russia is entering the period of contraction, isolation and impoverishment, you look back at these openings and think about what might have been."

McDonald's said in a statement that "at this juncture, it's impossible to predict when we might be able to reopen our restaurants in Russia." But it is continuing to pay its 62,500 Russian employees. The company said this week that it expects the closure to cost around $50 million per month.

Outside a McDonald's in Moscow last week, student Lev Shalpo bemoaned the closure.

"It's wrong because it was the only affordable place for me where I could eat," he said.

Nation

As gunman targets homeless, mayors urge all to seek shelter

NEW YORK (AP)—The mayors of New York City and Washington D.C. appealed to the public for help Monday in an urgent search for a gunman who has been stalking homeless men asleep on their streets, killing at least two people and wounding three others in less than two weeks.

Police in the two cities released multiple surveillance photographs, including a close-up snapshot clearly showing the man's face, and urged people who might know him to come forward.

"Our reach is far and wide, and we're coming for you," Metropolitan Police Department Chief Robert J. Contee said at a news conference in Washington, speaking directly to the gunman.

Investigators acknowledged, though, that they still knew little about the suspected killer or his motive.

Washington D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser and New York City Mayor Eric Adams, speaking together at the news conference, urged anyone living on the streets to go to city shelters where they might be safer.

"We know that our unsheltered residents already face a lot of daily dangers and it is unconscionable that anybody would target this vulnerable population," Bowser said.

These images taken from surveillance video and provided by the New York Police Department show a man suspected of shooting two homeless people on Saturday, March 12, 2022 in New York. AP

Adams said New York City police and homeless outreach teams would focus on finding unhoused people in the subways and other locations to urge them to seek refuge at city-owned shelters.

In Washington, city outreach workers were passing out flyers among the homeless population, urging people to "be vigilant" and featuring multiple pictures of the suspect.

The latest violence underscored the urgency to get the homeless off the streets and into safe housing, said Jacquelyn Simone, policy director for the Coalition for the Homeless in New York City.

"The reason that these people were attacked is because they didn't have that safety of permanent housing," she said. "And that's why we really need to use these tragedies as an opportunity to redouble our efforts to ensure that people have a better option than the streets where they're exposed to both the elements as well as people who might wish to do them harm."

Investigators in the two cities began to suspect a link between the shootings on Sunday after a Metropolitan Police Department homicide captain—a former resident of New York City—saw surveillance photos that had been released Saturday night by the NYPD while scrolling through social media.

The man in those photos looked similar to the one being sought by his own department.

D.C. Police Chief Robert Contee credited the quick coordination between departments, saying that without that officer making the connection, "It could have been months," before the link between the attacks was discovered.

The earliest known shooting happened at around 4 a.m. on March 3 in Washington D.C., police said, when a man was shot and wounded in the city's Northeast section. A second man was wounded on March 8, just before 1:30 a.m.

At 3 a.m. the next day, March 9, police and firefighters found a dead man inside a burning tent. He was initially thought to have suffered fatal burns, but a subsequent autopsy revealed that the man had died of multiple stab and gunshot wounds.

The killer then traveled north to New York City, police said.

At 4:30 a.m. Saturday, a 38-year-old man sleeping on the street in Manhattan not far from the entrance to the Holland Tunnel was shot in his right arm as he slept.

The victim screamed and the gunman fled, police said.

About 90 minutes later, the gunman fatally shot another man on Lafayette Street in SoHo, police said.

"He looked around. He made sure no one was there. And he intentionally took the life of an innocent person," Adams said.

The man's body was found in his sleeping bag just before 5 p.m. Saturday.

"Any one of us who's homeless could have went to that same situation," said Kess Abraham, who fell into homelessness last month.

After finding refuge in parks and other places across Brooklyn and Manhattan, Abraham tried to find help at the Bowery Mission, which houses hundreds of homeless people in its facilities across the city.

He said he was "pained" to learn of "a guy who lived on the streets who probably was minding his own business getting murdered for no reason."

Joel Castillo, a 24-year-old experiencing a first brush with homelessness who was also at the mission's downtown facility, said more should be done to keep the city's residents safe—homeless or otherwise.

"I don't know if it's a police problem, but given the circumstances, the police should actually kind of step up and do a little bit more. I'm not saying that they don't already do enough," he said, "but what I am saying is that there should be a lot more measures taken to ensure that the city's taxpayers are kept safe."

For kids with COVID-19, everyday life can be a struggle

WASHINGTON (AP)—Eight-year-old Brooklynn Chiles fidgets on the hospital bed as she waits for the nurse at Children's National Hospital. The white paper beneath her crinkles as she shifts to look at the medical objects in the room. She's had the coronavirus three times, and no one can figure out why.

Brooklynn's lucky, sort of. Each time she has tested positive, she has suffered no obvious symptoms. But her dad, Rodney, caught the virus when she was positive back in September, and he died from it.

Her mom, Danielle, is dreading a next bout, fearing her daughter could become gravely ill even though she's been vaccinated.

"Every time, I think: Am I going to go through this with her, too?" she said, sitting on a plastic chair wedged in the corner. "Is this the moment where I lose everyone?"

Among the puzzling outcomes of the coronavirus, which has killed more than 6 million people worldwide since it first emerged in 2019, are the symptoms suffered by children.

Lexie Stroiney, 6, curls up in the plethysmography chamber during a break in her pulmonary function test at Children's National Hospital, in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022. AP

More than 12.7 million children in the U.S. alone have tested positive for COVID-19 since the pandemic began, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Generally, the virus doesn't hit kids as severely as adults.

But, as with some adults, there are still bizarre outcomes. Some youngsters suffer unexplained symptoms long after the virus is gone, what's often called long COVID. Others get reinfected. Some seem to recover fine, only to be struck later by a mysterious condition that causes severe organ inflammation.

And all that can come on top of grieving for loved ones killed by the virus and other interruptions to a normal childhood.

Doctors at Children's National and multiple other hospitals getting money from the National Institutes of Health are studying the long-term effects of COVID-19 on children.

The ultimate goal is to evaluate the impact on children's overall health and development, both physically and mentally—and tease out how their still-developing immune systems respond to the virus to learn why some fare well and others don't.

Teen charged in fatal drive-by of man, 2-year-old in Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (AP)—A teenager has been charged with murder in a drive-by shooting in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, that left a man and a 2-year-old dead, authorities said Monday.

AL.com reports that Tyrese Laquon Bell, 19, aka "Red," is charged with murder in the Sunday afternoon shooting that killed Marcus Winston Jr., 25, and 2-year-old Ashton Jones, who is not related to Winston.

Winston died on the scene and the child died later at a hospital.

Bell was arrested Monday evening and will be held in the Tuscaloosa County Jail with bonds totaling $3 million.

Authorities said the shooting happened about 4:30 p.m. Sunday in the 3000 block of 19th Street. Investigators said a white, four-door vehicle occupied by multiple people drove by a residence beside a park and opened fire with long guns. Witnesses identified the vehicle as both as a car and small sport-utility vehicle with multiple people inside, Kennedy said.

Police were searching for three people who may have been present at the killing, said Capt. Jack Kennedy of the Tuscaloosa County Sheriff's Office. At that time, no charges had been filed and the three may or may not be suspects, he told a news conference. The other two - a male and a female - have been located. Authorities have not announced any charges against them and did not release a possible motive.

Earlier, in a statement shared on social media, Mayor Walt Maddox referred to the suspects in the shooting and said they "are not new" to Tuscaloosa police.

"The fact that the suspects are known speaks to our state's broken criminal justice system," Maddox said.

Bell was among several people arrested in 2020 after someone fired shots from a vehicle at University Manor Apartments off Greensboro Avenue and then led Tuscaloosa police on a chase before crashing into two unmarked Tuscaloosa Police Ford F-150 trucks parked on Eighth Street outside the Tuscaloosa County Sheriff's Office and the courthouse, AL. com reports.

Asia

COVID-19 cases more than double in China's outbreak

AP

A medical worker takes a swab sample from a child for Covid-19 testing in a community in Changzhou in eastern China's Jiangsu province Monday, March 14, 2022.

BEIJING (AP)—China's new COVID-19 cases Tuesday more than doubled from the previous day as the country faces by far its biggest outbreak since the early days of the pandemic.

The National Health Commission said 3,507 new locally spread cases had been identified in the latest 24-hour period, up from 1,337 a day earlier.

A fast-spreading variant known as "stealth omicron" is testing China's zero-tolerance strategy, which had kept the virus at bay since the deadly initial outbreak in the city of Wuhan in early 2020. While the numbers are low compared to elsewhere in the world, the more than 10,000 cases China recorded in the first two weeks of March far exceed previous flare-ups.

No new deaths have been reported in the multiple outbreaks across China. Most of the new cases were in northeast China's Jilin province, where 2,601 were reported. Smaller outbreaks have hit more than a dozen provinces and major cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Jilin has barred residents from leaving the province and from traveling between cities within it. The 9 million residents of Changchun, the provincial capital and an auto manufacturing hub, have been locked down since Friday as authorities conduct repeated rounds of mass testing both there and in the city of Jilin.

More than 1,000 medical workers have been flown in from other provinces along with pandemic response supplies, and the province has mobilized 7,000 military reservists to help with the response.

Elsewhere in China, Shandong province had the most new cases with 106. Guangdong province in the southeast, where the metropolis and major tech center of Shenzhen has been locked down since Sunday, reported 48 new cases. Shanghai had nine, and Beijing reported six.

ASIAN BRIEFS

PH summons China envoy to protest naval intrusion

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine government on Monday summoned the Chinese ambassador to protest what it said was the "illegal incursion" of a Chinese navy ship into the country's waters and to demand that Beijing order its ships to respect the country's territory and follow international law, officials said. The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said a reconnaissance ship of China's People's Liberation Army crossed into the Sulu Sea and cruised off the western Palawan and nearby Mindoro provinces from Jan. 29 to Feb. 1 without permission and in violation of Philippine sovereignty. Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Maria Theresa Lazaro summoned Beijing's envoy Huang Xilian and "demanded that China respect Philippine territory and maritime jurisdiction and to comply with its obligations under international law," the department said in a statement.

Witness: Army attacks in eastern Myanmar worst in decades

BANGKOK (AP)—While Russia's war in Ukraine dominates global attention, Myanmar's military is targeting civilians in air and ground attacks on a scale unmatched in the country since World War II, according to a longtime relief worker who spent almost three months in a combat zone in the Southeast Asian nation. David Eubank, director of the Free Burma Rangers, a humanitarian relief organization, told The Associated Press that the military's jets and helicopters stage frequent attacks in the areas of eastern Myanmar where he and his volunteers operate, bringing medical and food aid to civilians caught in conflict. Ground forces are also firing artillery—indiscriminately, he said—causing thousands to flee their homes. Video shot by his group's members includes rare images of repeated air strikes by Myanmar military aircraft in Kayah State – also known as Karenni State—causing a number of civilian deaths.

South Korea reports record deaths amid omicron surge

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea had its deadliest day yet of the pandemic on Tuesday, with 293 deaths reported in the latest 24 hours, as the country grapples with a record surge in coronavirus infections driven by the fast-moving omicron variant. The 1,196 virus patients in serious or critical conditions were also a new high. Health officials said the country's medical response remains stable following efforts to expand resources, with more than 30% of intensive care units designated for COVID-19 treatment still available. But the strain on the hospital system is expected to increase in coming weeks, considering the time lags between infections, hospitalizations and deaths. "We anticipate the number of (serious or critical cases) to grow to around 2,000. We are preparing our medical response for that," senior Health Ministry official Park Hyang said during a briefing. South Korea has reported a daily average of around 337,000 new cases in the past seven days, including 362,283 on Tuesday, representing more than an 80-fold increase from levels seen in mid-January, when omicron emerged as the dominant strain. The country's caseload is now over 7.2 million, with 6.4 million added since February.

World

Russia pounds away at Ukraine

AP

A local resident searches for his belongings in an apartment building after it was hit by artillery shelling in Kyiv, Ukraine, Monday, March 14, 2022.

LVIV, Ukraine (AP)—A narrow diplomatic path stayed open as Ukraine and Russia planned another round of talks and Moscow's forces pounded away at cities across the country, including the capital, in a bombardment that deepened the humanitarian crisis.

Shortly before dawn on Tuesday, large explosions thundered across Kyiv while Russia pressed its advance on multiple fronts.

■■■

PRZEMYSL, Poland (AP)—More than 2.8 million people have fled Ukraine in the wake of Russia's invasion, according to the U.N. refugee agency, the vast majority seeking refuge in Poland, which has taken in more than 1.7 million refugees in the last 19 days.

■■■

Elsewhere, a convoy of 160 civilian cars left the encircled port city of Mariupol along a designated humanitarian route, the city council reported, in a rare glimmer of hope a week and a half into the lethal siege that has pulverized homes and other buildings and left people desperate for food, water, heat and medicine.

The latest negotiations, held via video conference, were the fourth round involving higher-level officials from the two countries and the first in a week. The talks ended Monday without a breakthrough after several hours, with an aide to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy saying the negotiators took "a technical pause" and planned to meet again Tuesday.

The two sides had expressed some optimism in the past few days. Mykhailo Podolyak, the aide to Zelenskyy, tweeted that the negotiators would discuss "peace, ceasefire, immediate withdrawal of troops & security guarantees."

Previous discussions, held in person in Belarus, produced no lasting humanitarian routes or agreements to end the fighting.

In Washington, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said that while the Biden administration supports Ukraine's participation in the talks with Russia, Russian President Vladimir Putin would have to show signs of de-escalating in order to demonstrate good faith.

Overall, nearly all of the Russian military offensives remained stalled after making little progress over the weekend, according to a senior U.S. defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the Pentagon's assessment. Russian troops were still about 15 kilometers (9 miles) from the center of Kyiv, the official said.

The official said that Russian forces have launched more than 900 missiles but that Ukraine's airspace is still contested, with Russia not achieving total air superiority.

Ukrainian authorities said two people were killed when the Russians struck an airplane factory in Kyiv, sparking a large fire. The Antonov factory is Ukraine's largest aircraft plant and produces many of the world's biggest cargo planes.

Russian artillery fire also hit a nine-story apartment building in the northern Obolonskyi district of the city, killing two more people, authorities said.

And a Russian airstrike near a Ukrainian checkpoint caused extensive damage to a downtown Kyiv neighborhood, killing one person, Ukraine's emergency agency said.

Kateryna Lot said she was in her apartment as her child did homework when they heard a loud explosion and ran to take shelter.

"The child became hysterical. Our windows and the balcony were shattered. Part of the floor fell down," she said. "It was very, very scary."

In an area outside Kyiv, Fox News reporter Benjamin Hall was injured while reporting and was hospitalized, the network said.

In Russia, the live main evening news program on state television was briefly interrupted by a woman who walked into the studio holding a poster against the war. The OVD-Info website that monitors political arrests said she was a Channel 1 employee who taken into police custody.

A town councilor for Brovary, east of Kyiv, was killed in fighting there, officials said. Shells also fell on the Kyiv suburbs of Irpin, Bucha and Hostomel, which have seen some of the worst fighting in Russia's stalled attempt to take the capital, local authorities said.

Airstrikes were reported across the country, including the southern city of Mykolaiv, and the northern city of Chernihiv, where heat was knocked out to most of the town. Explosions also reverberated overnight around the Russian-occupied Black Sea port of Kherson.

Good Housekeeping

Make your child's room more fun, festive with these 10 tips

By CATHY HOBBS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Children's rooms by their very nature are meant to be bright, colorful and fun. Looking for ways to bring creativity into a children's bedroom space? Here are some top tips.

1. Bedding. Bedding is a prime decor element and a key opportunity to infuse color prints and patterns.

2. Citrus colors such as green, orange and yellow are both bright as well as gender neutral.

3. Artwork is an opportunity to bring large-scale color into a children's bedroom.

4. Removable wall stickers provide an alternative to wallpaper and can be used to create an interesting accent wall.

5. Portable play items such as hammocks offer fun play spaces, especially for young children.

6. Shelving provides an opportunity for organization and display in children's bedrooms. More great options are colorful bins and bags.

7. Area rugs offer an opportunity to infuse texture and color into children's rooms.

8. Mix candy colors together if looking to create overall color that allows for a versatile scheme.

9. Select neutral primary pieces such as beds and dressers and infuse color through elements such as artwork, area rugs and accessories.

10. Repurpose objects and decor in interesting ways. For example, use skateboards as shelving or a swing instead of a traditional seating or reading area.

(PROVIDED PHOTO/TNS)
Bright removable wall stickers provides versatile, portable decor in this children's bedroom.

NOW HERE'S A TIP

By JOANN DERSON
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■ Here's a great tip for freezing strawberries: Slip a berry into each section of an ice-cube tray, and then stack trays in the freezer. When frozen, transfer berries to a zipper-top bag and store in the freezer. They won't stick together, and you can just use what you need.

■ "Vinegar (1/3 cup) works just as well as rinsing agents in your dishwasher. Simply add it to the wash with your regular dishwasher detergent. It can help with cloudy glassware."—W.C. in Washington

■ "Another great use for a length of nylon stocking, or a knee-high, as we used to call them: Slip over your pet brush and poke the bristles through. Brush your cat or dog as normal. When you're done, you can pull the knee-high stocking right off and all the hair will be caught inside!"—P.K. in Pennsylvania

■ If you have a pickle- or jelly-jar lid that's stuck on, try using the handle end of a butter knife to tap a few indentations around the edges. This can sometimes loosen the seal, making it easier to remove the lid.

■ "When you get to the bottom of a bag of chips or a box of crackers, there usually are a lot of crumbs. I save ours in a baggie, then add them to breadcrumbs to bread fish or chicken. They add a lot of flavor, and it's basically free! It's funny, because I see packages of flavored breadcrumbs at the grocery store, and they are pretty expensive."—R.L. in Virginia

■ Fresh ginger can be frozen. Simply grate as needed. The flavor remains, and it will stay fresh much longer.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

LIVING SMART: Is track lighting the right choice for your home?

By JAMES FIGY
ANGIE'S LIST

When used correctly, track lighting highlights a room's best features.

Track lighting helps homeowners spotlight pieces of art or pieces of furniture. With an electrical current flowing through the track, this popular product allows homeowners to change or reposition individual fixtures after installation. But track lighting, which first received a patent more than 50 years ago, is just one option for interior lighting.

Whether you're taking on a complete home remodel or just trying to brighten up a room, consider these pros and cons before choosing track lighting.

Pro: It's easy to install

Track lighting is no more difficult to install than regular lighting, says Brandon Hill, director of purchasing and specifications for Kopke Remodeling & Design in Sterling Heights, Mich. It simply requires more attention to placement, he adds.

Homeowners may prefer track lighting if they don't want to cut into the ceiling to run wire and add electrical boxes, says Shelley McNaughton, owner of Shelley McNaughton Design Associates in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. "One of the reasons you want to use it is because you want lighting in a certain part of a room but you can't get into the ceiling," she says.

Con: The fixtures may cost more

Compared to other fixtures, which connect directly to an electrical box, track lighting isn't the cheapest option, McNaughton says. The type of fixtures and length of track also impact the cost, she adds.

Many tracks with directional fixtures cost between $50 and $100 for an almost 4-foot track. However, longer tracks with more fixtures could cost more than $500. Any special fixtures will cost more. Also, the project will require a few hours of labor, and licensed electricians usually charge $50 to $100 per hour, according to CostHelper.com.

Pro: It highlights specific features well

"Track lighting would be (useful) when you want to light something specifically," McNaughton says. Directional fixtures can spotlight artwork on a gallery wall or a piece of furniture, while hanging pendants shine downward onto a kitchen island, table or some other surface, she says.

Con: It provides poor general lighting

Hill says homeowners should consider the type of light source needed, the type of bulbs they want, what the room is used for and the ambiance they want. Homeowners should choose lighting based on these needs and use track lighting only when appropriate.

If track lighting is the right choice, homeowners should use it to highlight specific features of a room, not the entire room, Hill says.

While track lighting works well in kitchens and living rooms, which often have auxiliary light sources, McNaughton doesn't recommend it for bathrooms and smaller spaces.

Pro: It comes in many different styles

With a plethora of different track and fixture styles, homeowners can easily find something to fit their decor. This rings especially true in contemporary settings, Hill says.

"Design-wise, track has a more modern or eclectic feel," he says.

Con: It sometimes looks clunky

In some settings, the track and additional hardware may make a ceiling too busy, McNaughton says. She often recommends recessed lighting with directional heads as an alternative. But in many cases, she adds, track lighting proves a good option.

"Depending on how they're used in the room, track lighting usually works," McNaughton says. "... It's just one of those things that you know when you're going to use and you know when you're not."

Life & Style

In Ukraine, female war reporters build on legacy of pioneers

AP

From left, Martha Raddatz of ABC, Clarissa Ward of CNN, Erin McLaughlin of NBC News, Jerusalem-based Fox News senior producer Yonat Friling, and Christiane Amanpour of CNN.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Clarissa Ward interrupted her live TV report on Ukrainian refugees to help a distraught older man, then a woman, down a steep and explosion-mangled path, gently urging them on in their language.

A day later, Lynsey Addario, a photographer for The New York Times, captured a grim image of a Russian mortar attack's immediate outcome: the bodies of a mother and her two children crumpled on a road, amid their suitcase, backpacks and a pet carrier.

The memorable reports illustrate both the skill and gutsiness of female journalists serving as eyewitnesses to Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine and the way their presence—hard-won after overcoming ingrained notions of why women shouldn't cover combat—has changed the nature of war reporting.

They cover the tactics of war, but give equal measure to its toll.

"People are so exhausted, they can barely walk," Ward told viewers in her report. "It's just an awful, awful scene. And they're the lucky ones."

The author of "You Don't Belong Here," a 2021 book that profiles three pioneering women who covered the Vietnam War, said there's "absolutely no doubt that the reporting is what I would call more humane, looking at the human side of war."

Elizabeth Becker argues that Frances FitzGerald of the U.S., Kate Webb of Australia and Catherine Leroy of France were foundational to modern war reporting. Arriving in Southeast Asia on their own dime, without a staff job and little or no journalism experience, they broke the male grip on war reporting with daring and innovation.

Traditionally, "the coverage was the battlefield, which is important," said award-winning journalist Becker, a Cambodian war correspondent in the 1970s. She said it took newcomer FitzGerald to ask, "'OK, what does this mean in terms of the Vietnamese and the villages?'"

War reporting is "a sense of mission, it's a sense of purpose, it's a sense of being able to tell a story," said Christiane Amanpour, the London-born chief international anchor for CNN. "And women are really very good at it, it seems."

It's also a matter of logic, said Holly Williams, the Istanbul-based correspondent for CBS News on assignment in Ukraine.

"I'm acutely aware of the fact that if you don't tell women's stories, you're missing at least half of the picture," said the Australian-born Williams, who has reported on conflicts in Asia and the Middle East.

Ward, who has hopscotched across those regions, worked for CBS News prior to joining CNN and, before that, was based in Moscow and Beijing for ABC News.

"Often women do have a different perspective on war, and for a long time that was not really at the forefront of a lot of coverage," Ward said. She strives to include "the humanity behind the story, the experience of ordinary people who are living in war zones. To me, that is equally as important as the military component."

The prominence of TV correspondents and the reach of their outlets adds to their impact. Oprah Winfrey offered online praise of network reporters "risking their lives to show the world the truth."

Many male colleagues also contribute nuanced reporting, as ABC News veteran Martha Raddatz and others noted. But Raddatz recalls a not-so-distant time when men tended to "love the equipment, love the airplanes."

Ward and and other female journalists routinely tip their cap to their predecessors, including FitzGerald, and praise recent trailblazers, including Amanpour.

Judge makes ban on Saget autopsy records release permanent

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—A judge in Florida on Monday agreed to make permanent an order that prohibits the release of photos, video or other records related to the investigation into the death of comedian Bob Saget.

During a court hearing in Orlando, Circuit Judge Vincent Chiu said he would issue a permanent injunction that had been requested by Saget's widow, Kelly Rizzo, and his three daughters. The family members had filed a lawsuit seeking to stop the release of any records from the local medical examiner's office and the Orange County Sheriff's Office involving the investigation into Saget's death.

Saget, 65, was found dead Jan. 9 in a room at the Ritz Carlton in Orlando. He had performed in the area the previous night as part of a stand-up tour.

Saget died from an accidental blow to the head, likely from a fall backward, according to the medical examiner. An autopsy report showed that Saget had an abrasion on his scalp, a fracture at the base of his skull, fractures around his eye sockets, bruises to the brain, and bleeding between the brain and tissue covering the brain. A toxicology analysis didn't show any illicit drugs or toxins in Saget's body.

During the course of the autopsy and death investigation, the medical examiner's office and sheriff's office created graphic videos and photos of Saget's body, as well as audio recordings. Such records are prohibited by state law from being released publicly, but some media outlets had already filed requests for them, according to the family's lawsuit.

Pete Davidson headed to space on Blue Origin craft

NEW YORK (AP)—Pete Davidson is heading to space.

The "Saturday Night Live" star is among the six passengers on the next launch of Jeff Bezos' space travel venture Blue Origin, the company announced Monday.

The launch is scheduled for March 23 and Davidson will be the third celebrity on a Blue Origin flight. William Shatner was on a flight in October, blasting off from West Texas and reaching a height of roughly 66 miles above Earth on the 10-minute jaunt.

Former NFL great and "Good Morning America" co-host Michael Strahan flew on Blue Origin's second passenger flight in December, joining astronaut Alan Shepard's daughter on the journey. Bezos, the founder of Amazon, flew on the company's first passenger flight last July.

The other passengers on next week's flight are CEO and investor Marty Allen; Sharon and Marc Hagle; teacher and entrepreneur Jim Kitchen and George Nield, a former NASA manager who has worked to promote commercial spaceflight.

Marc Hagle is CEO of the commercial and residential property company Tricor International. His wife, Sharon Hagle, founded SpaceKids Global, a nonprofit aimed at inspiring children about spaceflight.

Blue Origin flights give passengers a few minutes of weightlessness above the Earth's surface before the capsule parachutes and lands in the West Texas desert. The company has not disclosed the ticket price for paying customers.

Davidson, who is currently dating reality star Kim Kardashian, wrote and starred in the semi-autobiographical film "The King of Staten Island," which was released in 2020.

Depth of partner's affection unspoken until it's too late

DEAR ABBY: My longtime boyfriend passed away after an extended illness, and I'd like to offer a suggestion to your readers I wish I had thought of before his passing.

After the funeral, I was thinking about what a wonderful man he was, so I decided to compile a list of his good qualities. The list grew longer the more I thought about his many positive attributes. They were big and small things, but they all added up to why I loved him so much. x

I wish I'd had it framed and given it to him while he was healthy, or at least while he was still living. I know it would have meant the world to him. I hope my suggestion will be adopted by your readers. It could bring so much happiness to the person you love. Do it before it's too late.

LOVED SO MUCH ABOUT HIM

DEAR LOVED: Please accept my sympathy for your loss. Death is particularly poignant if there are words left unsaid. I subscribe to your philosophy. That message is eloquently conveyed in a poem included in my "Keepers" booklet. A quick and easy read, "Keepers" is a collection of poems, essays and letters readers have repeatedly asked me to reprint. Many subjects are covered, including children, parenting, animals, aging, death, forgiveness and more.

It can be ordered by sending your name and address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to Dear Abby Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price. "Keepers" makes an inexpensive gift for newlyweds, pet lovers, new parents, and anyone who is grieving or recovering from an illness.

What follows is the poem I mentioned:
"The Time Is Now" (Author Unknown)
If you are ever going to love me,
Love me now, while I can know
The sweet and tender feelings
Which from true affection flow.
Love me now
While I am living.
Do not wait until I'm gone
And then have it chiseled in marble,
Sweet words on ice-cold stone.
If you have tender thoughts of me,
Please tell me now.
If you wait until I am sleeping,
Never to awaken,
There will be death between us
And I won't hear you then.
So, if you love me, even a little bit,
Let me know it while I am living
So I can treasure it.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: If I'm with a close friend and she has a prominent hair on her face, should I say anything? I appreciate it when someone brings something like that to my attention. As a member of several women's clubs, I wouldn't want to be known as the "hairy lady"!

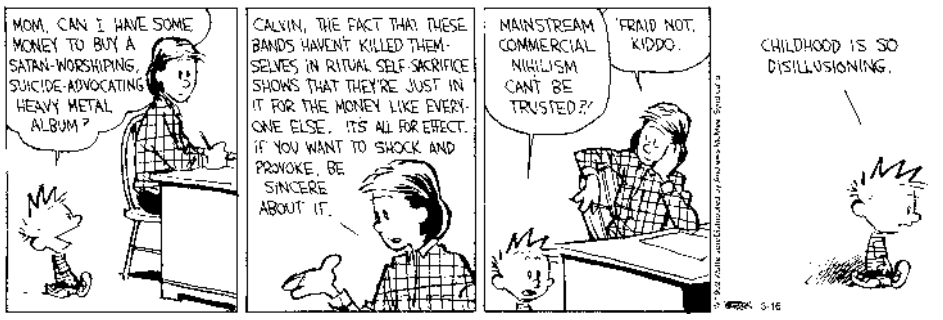
HELPFUL IN VIRGINIA

DEAR HELPFUL: Of COURSE you should say something — privately. A true friend should not only tell her but also share a pair of tweezers and a pocket mirror from your makeup bag with her.

Pastimes

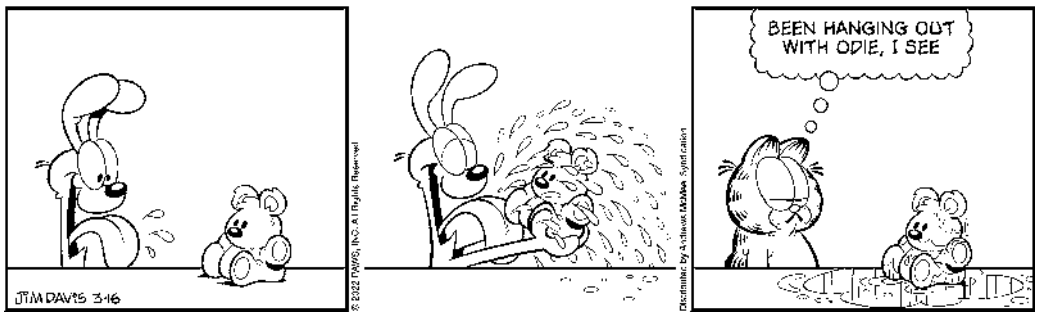
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


MOM, CAN I HAVE SOME MONEY TO BUY A SATAN-WORSHIPING, SUICIDE-ADVOCATING HEAVY METAL ALBUM?
CALVIN, THE FACT THAT THESE BANDS HAVEN'T KILLED THEMSELVES IN RITUAL SELF-SACRIFICE SHOWS THAT THEY'RE JUST IN IT FOR THE MONEY LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. IT'S ALL FOR EFFECT. IF YOU WANT TO SHOCK AND PROVOKE, BE SINCERE ABOUT IT.
MAINSTREAM COMMERCIAL NIHILISM CAN'T BE TRUSTED?!
'FRAID NOT, KIDDO.
CHILDHOOD IS SO DISILLUSIONING.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



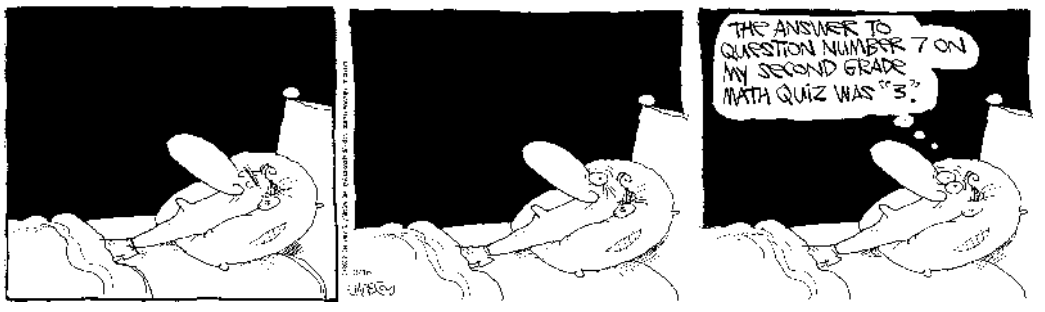
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I'M LATE TO KATY'S TEA PARTY.
AND I JUST KNOW THAT AWFUL RABBIT'LL BE THERE.
FANCY AND I ARE LIKE OIL AND WATER.
ADAM, IT'S A STUFFED RABBIT.
WITH JUDGY, BEADY EYES.
THEY'RE ACTUAL BEADS, DAD.
3-16

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

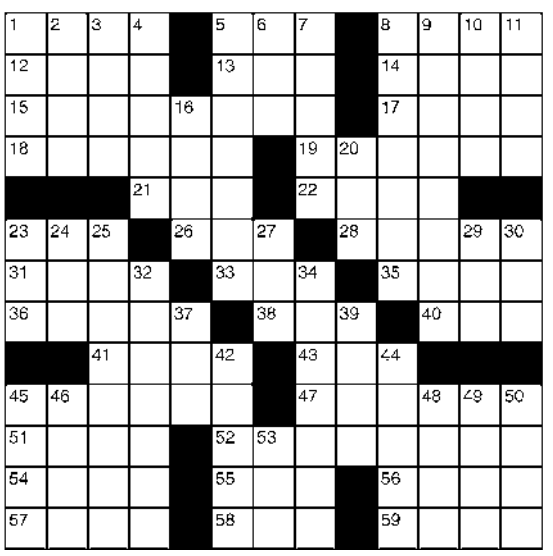
ACROSS
1 Latin love
5 Monk's title
8 Fortas and Lincoln
12 Brazilian rubber
13 iPad platform
14 Stir up
15 Noisy wood cutters
17 Greek pita sandwich
18 Sailing vessels
19 Parisian palace
21 Documentarian Burns
22 Body powder
23 Bar bill
26 Auction signal
28 Showy flower
31 Detail
33 Cry
35 "Absolutely!"
36 Tight-fisted
38 Light touch
40 Body art, for short
41 Rip
43 Zodiac animal
45 Skirmish
47 Plaza Hotel girl
51 Gershwin's "— Rhythm"
52 DVD collection, e.g.
54 Insult
55 Sch. founded by Jefferson
56 — Bator
57 Syringe, for short
58 Muppet eagle
59 Country singer Evans

DOWN
1 SFPD alerts
2 Man-handle
3 Rice-shaped pasta
4 Beard remover
5 Debacles
6 Squabble
7 Plus
8 Diamond-patterned socks
9 Troop member
10 Green land
11 — gin fizz
16 Whirl
20 Napkin's place
23 Spasm
24 Sports fig.
25 Borscht
27 Speck
29 New Deal agcy.
30 Even so
32 Conductor
34 Law grad's test
37 Bud
39 Ashen
42 Picture puzzle
44 — operandi
45 Mrs. Addams, to Gomez
46 Unsightly
48 Actress Fisher
49 Char
50 Sicilian volcano
53 Eggs

Solution time: 23 mins.

C	O	L	E		C	O	R	T		S	L	O	B
U	R	A	L		B	A	A			C	O	R	A
S	C	H	M	C	O	Z	E			H	O	A	R
P	A	R		K	E	E		A	N	K	L	E	
			S	I	S		F	H	A				
I	E	L	C	C		L	C	C	U	S	I	S	
R	O	S	H		B	A	Y		Z	O	O	S	
A	N	D	H	O	I	D		W	E	D	G	E	
			E	A	T		M	A	R				
A	U	D	I	T		C	A	R		A	L	A	
S	N	U	B		S	C	H	N	A	P	P	S	
T	U	N	E		N	I	A		C	O	G	S	
A	M	E	R		O	I	L		S	P	A	T	

Yesterday's answer 3-16



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5855**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Joel Embiid, 28; Judah Friedlander, 53; Lauren Graham, 55; Victor Garber, 73.

Happy Birthday: Read between the lines, and you'll figure out how to get the most out of whatever you pursue. Choose a path that offers satisfaction and joy, not stress and regret. Adjust your lifestyle to fit your budget, and use your attributes to serve you instead of those using you for their profit. Be mindful of others and good to yourself. Your numbers are 9, 14, 22, 25, 34, 37, 49.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Put in the time, and you'll reap the rewards. Reach out and make a difference to a cause that matters to you. The connections you make will be lasting and fruitful. An unexpected change is apparent. Take advantage of an opportunity. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Don't jump into something without doing your homework. Test the atmosphere before you engage in a conversation concerning sensitive issues. Have a backup plan in place, and you'll come out on top. Change that comes from the heart will gain you respect. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Don't be fooled by someone's rhetoric. Listen, then head in a direction that suits you, not the others. Look out for your well-being. Use your skills and expertise to your advantage, and put your energy into something that makes you happy. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Conversations will lead to something that interests you. The information you gather will spark your imagination and encourage you to use your ideas to pursue something that excites you. A unique approach to an old plan will be fruitful. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Slow down; spontaneity will get you in trouble. Bide your time, put your generosity on the back burner, and don't let your emotions interfere with practicality. Concentrate on how you look and feel, and on what makes you happy. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Don't hold back. If something bothers you, say something. Conversations will lead to resolutions that will put your mind at ease and make your relationship with someone better. A positive change is within reach; don't be afraid to make a move. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Preparation is paramount if you want to bring about positive change. Let your intuition help you decipher what's best for you, and put your energy where it will help you excel. Networking, focusing on self-improvement, and updating your skills, image and goals will pay off. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* It's up to you to bring about change. Stop dreaming and start doing. Concentrate on what will make your life easier and put to rest what stands between you and your goals. Clear up clutter and unfinished business, and get finances in order. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Don't lose sight of your goals. Refuse to let anyone meddle or cause emotional turmoil. Look inward and consider what you want. Protect against injury or illness by avoiding being put in a vulnerable position. Choose to do your own thing. ✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* You'll receive an unexpected opportunity. Don't hem and haw when action is required. Size up whatever situation you encounter, and do what's best for you. Don't follow others when it's apparent you stand to get ahead by relying on experience. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Put your energy into self-improvement, health, fitness and meaningful relationships. Choose to follow the path that puts a smile on your face and a skip in your step. Live in the moment, and prioritize love, peace and happiness. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Get involved in what's happening around you. You don't have a say if you don't participate. Share your thoughts and make a difference. Change begins with you. Consider what makes you happy, and take the path that fulfills your needs. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are insightful, passionate and thoughtful. You are sensitive and compromising.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	3	4						
	6		1					
	8			5				
	9				7			
6	4	5	7 9	2	8	6		
2	5	6	3	7	9	8	1	
8							4	
	1	8	4	9	5	2		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/16

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	9	2	1	5	3	6	7	4
4	6	3	7	9	8	5	2	1
7	5	1	4	6	2	9	3	8
9	3	8	6	2	7	4	1	5
5	1	6	9	3	4	2	8	7
2	7	4	5	8	1	3	9	6
1	2	5	8	4	9	7	6	3
3	4	7	2	1	6	8	5	9
6	8	9	3	7	5	1	4	2

Difficulty Level ★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

THE CRÈME DE LA CRÈME Solution: 10 letters

S	M	A	C	A	D	E	M	I	C	A	P	O	O	L
T	R	U	R	R	B	C	A	R	E	E	R	H	L	M
A	B	E	S	T	E	H	T	L	A	E	W	I	Y	A
T	L	C	D	I	I	N	O	V	H	N	K	E	M	E
U	A	I	P	A	C	S	N	E	O	S	K	R	P	T
S	N	O	R	O	E	I	T	I	U	W	H	A	I	N
N	O	V	I	T	S	L	T	O	W	O	C	R	C	E
O	I	Y	Z	S	A	I	I	R	P	H	T	C	S	M
I	S	E	E	M	T	G	T	R	O	S	A	H	P	A
P	S	N	R	E	I	O	I	I	S	P	W	Y	O	N
M	E	O	P	T	R	M	C	F	O	P	H	A	R	R
A	F	M	S	E	A	E	L	K	T	N	U	Y	T	U
H	O	E	W	R	S	L	Y	T	E	I	C	O	S	O
C	R	O	Y	A	L	T	Y	R	E	N	I	A	R	T
P	P	R	I	V	I	L	E	G	E	E	D	A	R	G

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Academic, Artist, Best, Career, Champion, Choices, Competition, Formal, Gift, Grade, Groups, Hero, Hierarchy, Leaders, Money, Music, Olympics, Pool, Position, Power, Prestigious, Primary, Privilege, Prize, Professional, Rank, Royalty, Show, Skill, Society, Sports, Status, Stock, Team, Tournament, Trainer, Trophy, Voice, Watch, Wealth, Winner

Yesterday's Answer: Muscles

Treasuries 24 through 41 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Russia invasion upends Olympic 'neutrality'—if it existed

By STEPHEN WADE
AP SPORTS WRITER

AP

Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, greets International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach at an event welcoming IOC members ahead of the upcoming Winter Olympics at the Rus Hotel, Feb. 4, 2014, in Sochi, Russia.

The International Olympic Committee has always been political, from the sheikhs and royals in its membership to a seat at the United Nations to pushing for peace talks between the Koreas. But Russia's invasion of Ukraine three weeks ago exposed its irreconcilable claims of "political neutrality."

The IOC's politics were evident at Hitler's 1936 Olympics. During the Cold War, the Games were a stage for conflict (Mexico City), violence (Munich) and boycotts (Moscow). To this day, the IOC has partnered with authoritarian states like China and Russia, beginning with the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics, through the doping-scarred Sochi Games to the just-closed Beijing Winter Olympics.

Yawning gaps exist between what the IOC has long insisted it is—"the very heart of world sport"—and a view that hews closer to reality; a nonprofit sports business, based in Switzerland, that generates about 90% of its income from selling broadcast rights and sponsorships.

Increasingly, the IOC must cater to rich sponsors that were barely a factor 30 years ago as the Games, almost bankrupt, turned commercial and professional. Olympic athletes are pressing for a larger slice of the pie, aware their careers are fragile (only 30% of them attend the Olympics more than once).

The most visible politics involve the 206 nations and territories that march into the Games under national colors, flags, and stirring anthems—but never in a vacuum. By comparison, the U.N. has only 193 member states.

Following the invasion of Ukraine—acting because of a breach of the so-called Olympic Truce and not because of the war itself—the IOC recommended that sports federations and event organizers "not invite or allow" Russian or Belarusian athletes to participate.

But it left loopholes, stayed out of the fray and urged others to act. Many have, leaving Russians and Belarusians out of most sports competitions. The IOC itself has not banned the Russian or Belarusian Olympic committees, nor IOC members from those countries, nor has it asked publicly that top IOC sponsors take any action.

The IOC tries to have it both ways—and often three or four ways.

"To take a strong stand on Russia is relatively safe. And the only critics will be those of us who point out the IOC's inconsistencies," said Helen Jefferson Lenskyj, a professor emerita at the University of Toronto and author of "The Olympic Games—A Critical Approach."

Hearing athletes' voices?

The IOC has an in-house Athletes Commission, but it faces pressure from outside groups. To participate in the Olympics, athletes must sign away image and likeness rights, limit their freedom of expression and also sign waivers. Waivers for the Tokyo and Beijing Olympics had an added clause that relieved the IOC of responsibility from any fallout linked to COVID-19.

The IOC has said that athletes and national federations have insurance coverage for most eventualities.

Rob Koehler, general secretary of the advocacy group Global Athlete, said his body helped Ukrainian athletes write to the IOC, asking for a ban on Russia and Belarus. He said he has received neither a reply nor an acknowledgement of the letter.

"Failure to act swiftly against Russia and Belarus will continue to erode the Olympic brand," Koehler said, "and when that brand erodes the people that are most affected are the athletes—the ones that fill the stadium and draw sponsors and broadcasters."

In his first news conference 8 1/2 years ago as IOC president, Thomas Bach spelled out the organization's position with a precise ambiguity.

"The IOC cannot be apolitical," Bach said. "We have to realize that our decisions at events like Olympic Games, they have political implications. And when taking these decisions we have to, of course, consider political implications."

Before his words could be parsed, though, he added to the riddle: "But in order to fulfill our role to make sure that in the Olympic Games and for the participants the Charter is respected, we have to be strictly politically neutral. And there we also have to protect the athletes."

> Gaps exist between what the IOC has long insisted it is—"the very heart of world sport"—and a view that hews closer to reality; a nonprofit sports business that generates about 90% of its income from selling broadcast rights and sponsorships.

A day before the Winter Olympics opened last month, Bach said the position of the IOC must be "political neutrality." He said to do otherwise would put "the Games at risk." Three weeks later, after Bach stood next to Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony, Russia invaded Ukraine.

The IOC then acknowledged a reality, saying the war had created a "dilemma which cannot be solved."

Key to success

The key to the Olympics' success has been as much political as sporting. Part of the compelling tension behind the Olympics is the competition among countries, the nationalism, the flags fluttering and the riveting anthems. Winning the most gold medals becomes a surrogate for national superiority, increasingly a competition between authoritarians and democracies.

Many Olympic disciplines have scant popularity, drawing an audience every four years through the quest for gold. Few except for hardcore fans would care about Greco-Roman wrestling, modern pentathlon or fencing—if that is, nationalism were not the obvious backdrop. And China has become a power at the Winter Paralympics, allowing it to tout its lead atop the medal table to an increasingly nationalist audience.

Patriotism and politics drive some of the Olympics' appeal to sponsors and TV broadcasters, while simultaneously the IOC insists it is politically neutral. The IOC has permanent observer status at the United Nations to increase political clout—not reduce it. A sports business, the IOC is among a few nongovernmental bodies—the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is another—that share the status.

Jules Boykoff, a political science professor at Pacific University and a critic of the IOC, suggested that instead of athletes marching under national flags, they should enter under sports disciplines—skaters together, basketball players in a group, gymnasts paired up. "Athletes might get to know each other more with that kind of mingling," said Boykoff, author of "Power Games: A Political History of the Olympics."

But no national flags. Of course, no national flags could be a death knell for the Olympics.

Boykoff said the IOC, if it acknowledges politics, "wedges open the door for a deeper discussion about what sort of politics the IOC supports."

"Over the years the IOC has shown a conspicuous tolerance for tyranny. But by using `apolitical' as a shield, they can ward off the legitimate criticism and just claim they work with everyone regardless of politics. They choose to ignore the fact that neutrality can mean siding with oppressive forces."

Political since the beginning

Almost every Modern Olympics, dating from the first in 1896, has had political overtones.

In Antwerp in 1920, the countries defeated in World War I were not invited to attend. That meant Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. Nor did the newly formed Soviet Union participate.

In 1936 in Berlin, Hitler hoped to use the Games to tout so-called Aryan racial superiority. Black American Jesse Owens won four gold medals, blunting Hitler's propaganda.

In Mexico City in 1968, Black Americans Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fists on the podium in a black-power salute. The U.S. Olympic Committee kicked them off the team, but in 2019 they were inducted into the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee Hall of Fame.

China held the 2008 Olympics under a wide belief they could produce improvements in human rights, The consensus is that such progress did not happen, and the just-completed 2022 Winter Olympics were held in the middle of a pandemic amid worsening human rights conditions for minority Uyghurs and Tibetans, and a tightened grip on Hong Kong.

International Paralympic Committee President Andrew Parsons complained that his speech at the opening ceremony on March 4, which began with an impassioned anti-war plea, was censored by China's state broadcaster. China has declined to publicly criticize Russia's invasion, and Parsons' words in English were left untranslated or muted, which Chinese officials attributed to an unexplained "glitch."

Now, the Olympics move from China, a country that bans virtually all protest, to France, where vigorous street protest is part of the culture—and where dissent could be played up rather than shut down. For Paris, when it comes to keeping order, it could be a rough ride.

Xu Guoqi, a historian at the University of Hong Kong and the author of "Olympic Dreams: China and Sports" suggests that any "new Cold War era" could be bad news for the Games. After all, as Xu points out, during the original Cold War "everything was political" and the Olympics were singed with three boycotts—Montreal, Moscow and Los Angeles. The Olympic spirit waned then—and could again.

"It seems to me," Xu said, that "there has never existed a pure Olympics."

Nadal now 17-0, No. 1 Medvedev crashes out at Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. (AP)—Rafael Nadal is still perfect in 2022.

The Spaniard defeated 27th-seeded Daniel Evans 7-5, 6-3 Monday in the third round of the BNP Paribas Open, improving his record to 17-0 this year in pursuit of an ATP Tour-leading fourth title.

Nadal tied Roger Federer (2018) and Pete Sampras (1997) for the third-best overall start to a season in the Open era that began in 1968.

Daniil Medvedev's rise to No. 1 in the world came crashing down in a 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 loss to Gael Monfils. Medvedev needed to reach the quarterfinals in the desert to stay at the top, where he replaced Novak Djokovic.

"Is it better to be No. 1 for let's say one week in your life or never touch it?" Medvedev said. "You know, I think it's still better to at least touch it."

Djokovic will reclaim the No. 1 ranking next week. The Serb is unvaccinated against COVID-19, so he wasn't allowed to enter the United States to play at Indian Wells or the upcoming Miami Open.

So far this year, no one is touching the fourth-ranked Nadal.

He became the first player to win 400 matches in ATP Masters 1000 events.

AP

Rafael Nadal, of Spain, returns a shot to Daniel Evans, of Britain, at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament Monday, March 14, 2022, in Indian Wells, Calif.

After sitting out much of last year because of injury, Nadal has been on a tear. He won titles at Melbourne, the Australian Open for his record 21st Grand Slam title and Acapulco, and is chasing a third career title at Indian Wells.

Nadal's win over Evans under a searing desert sun had him coming from a break down in the first set. It ended with the Spaniard serving out the match at love, ripping a forehand winner on triple match point.

"It's an important victory against a tricky opponent," Nadal said. "It's not an easy opponent to play. He plays tactically very well, using very well his slice, then playing aggressive, changing rhythms on the points."

Before his first match in California, Nadal withdrew from the hard-court event at Miami, which begins March 21. He turns 36 in June and is dealing with chronic pain in his left foot and tendinitis in both knees.

"I cannot make drastic changes like I did in the past," he said, "so that's why I decided to stop after here and to have three weeks before the clay court season starts for me."

Nadal survived a scare in his first match against Sebastian Korda. The 21-year-old American served for the match leading 5-2 and 5-4 in the final set.

"It was very important that I can win these first two matches without playing fantastic, but today was a little bit better than the first day," Nadal said.

Monfils reached the fourth round at Indian Wells for the fifth time in six years after his second career upset of a No. 1 player. He knocked out Nadal in the quarterfinals at Doha in 2009.

"I just felt good today," Monfils said. "Tactically, I was good. I'm full of confidence."

Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz defeated countryman and 15th-seeded Roberto Bautista Agut 6-2, 6-0 and next plays Monfils.

Reilly Opelka beat 13th-seeded Denis Shapovalov, 6-7 (4), 6-4, 6-4 to set up a fourth-round match against Nadal. The 24-year-old American is coming off two straight finals appearances that went to tie-breakers in both sets. He won at Dallas and lost at Delray Beach, Florida.

In women's action, No. 4 seed Anett Kontaveit lost to Marketa Vondrousova 3-6, 7-5, 7-6 (5). No. 6 seed Maria Sakkari defeated Petra Kvitova 6-3, 6-0.

Mets sign veteran reliever Adam Ottavino to $4M, 1-year deal

NEW YORK (AP)—The busy New York Mets added an experienced arm to their bullpen Monday, signing Adam Ottavino to a $4 million, one-year contract.

The veteran right-hander can earn another $1 million in performance bonuses.

Ottavino, who grew up in Brooklyn and has lived in New York City during previous offseasons, returns to pitch for a hometown team again. He spent 2019-20 with the Yankees before they traded him to Boston, where he went 7-3 with a 4.21 ERA and 11 saves in 69 appearances last year. He struck out 71 and walked 35 in 62 innings, then became a free agent.

The 36-year-old Ottavino, who features a sharp-breaking slider, is 32-31 with a 3.60 ERA and 30 saves in 11 major league seasons with the Cardinals, Rockies, Yankees and Red Sox.

He joins a Mets bullpen that includes closer Edwin Díaz, setup man Trevor May and versatile right-hander Seth Lugo.

New York is looking for a lefty to replace Aaron Loup, who had an outstanding 2021 season with the Mets (6-0, 0.95 ERA) before signing with the Los Angeles Angels in November.

AP

Boston Red Sox relief pitcher Adam Ottavino throws against the Houston Astros during the eighth inning in Game 6 of baseball's American League Championship Series, Oct. 22, 2021, in Houston.

Eager to win under free-spending owner Steve Cohen, the Mets have been active since the Major League Baseball lockout ended last week—just as they were before rosters were frozen in early December.

They acquired All-Star starting pitcher Chris Bassitt from Oakland on Saturday for a pair of minor league pitching prospects. He joins a rotation headlined by Jacob deGrom and newcomer Max Scherzer, who was signed Dec. 1 as part of a $254.5 million spending spree by Cohen that also netted center fielder Starling Marte, outfielder Mark Canha and third baseman Eduardo Escobar.

The Mets also have a new manager in Buck Showalter and general manager in Billy Eppler.

Ottavino set career highs in saves and wins last season. He tied for the American League lead with 22 holds and was the only AL pitcher with at least 10 saves and 20 holds.

The 6-foot-5 Ottavino has limited right-handed hitters to a .213 batting average throughout his career. He also faced 101 lefty batters last year and did not allow a home run.

Ottavino was 8-8 with a 2.76 ERA and 113 strikeouts over 84 2/3 innings during his two seasons with the Yankees. He has fanned 296 batters in 224 1/3 innings over the past four years.

Ottavino would get a $100,000 bonus for pitching 30 innings, $125,000 each for 35 and 40 innings, $150,000 each for 45 and 50 innings, and $175,000 each for 55 and 60 innings.

49ers agree to deal with CB Charvarius Ward

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP)—The San Francisco 49ers made their first big move of free agency, agreeing with former Kansas City cornerback Charvarius Ward on a three-year contract.

A person familiar with the deal confirmed it Monday night, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the contract can't be signed until the start of the new league year on Wednesday.

ESPN first reported the agreement and said it could be worth up to $42 million with $26.7 million guaranteed.

The contract with Ward gives San Francisco needed help in the secondary and is the richest one handed out to a cornerback by the team in six seasons under coach Kyle Shanahan and general manager John Lynch.

Ward spent the past four seasons in Kansas City after being acquired by the Chiefs in a trade with the Cowboys. Ward had originally signed with Dallas in 2018 as an undrafted free agent.

Ward became a starter in Kansas City in his second season and helped the Chiefs beat the 49ers in the Super Bowl that year. He has four interceptions and 29 passes defensed in 56 career games.

Over the last three seasons, Ward has allowed opponents to catch less than half of the passes thrown with him in coverage, according to Pro Football Focus, as he has developed into one of the game's better cover cornerbacks.

Ward's addition fills a void on San Francisco's defense. The Niners struggled to get consistent play after Jason Verrett went down with a season-ending knee injury in the opener last year. Emmanuel Moseley and rookie Ambry Thomas provided the best play and were starters at the end of the year but adding a proven option was a priority this offseason.

San Francisco began free agency by losing two key free agents with guard Laken Tomlinson agreeing to a contract with the New York Jets and defensive tackle D.J. Jones agreeing with the Denver.

The other big question hanging over the Niners is the future of quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo. San Francisco plans to hand the offense over to last year's No. 3 overall pick Trey Lance and is looking for a trade partner to send back a pick for Garoppolo and his salary of more than $24 million.

Kershaw can earn up to $22M as part of 2022 Dodgers' deal

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP)—Clayton Kershaw can earn $5 million in performance bonuses for starts as part of his new contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers, which would raise his earnings to $22 million.

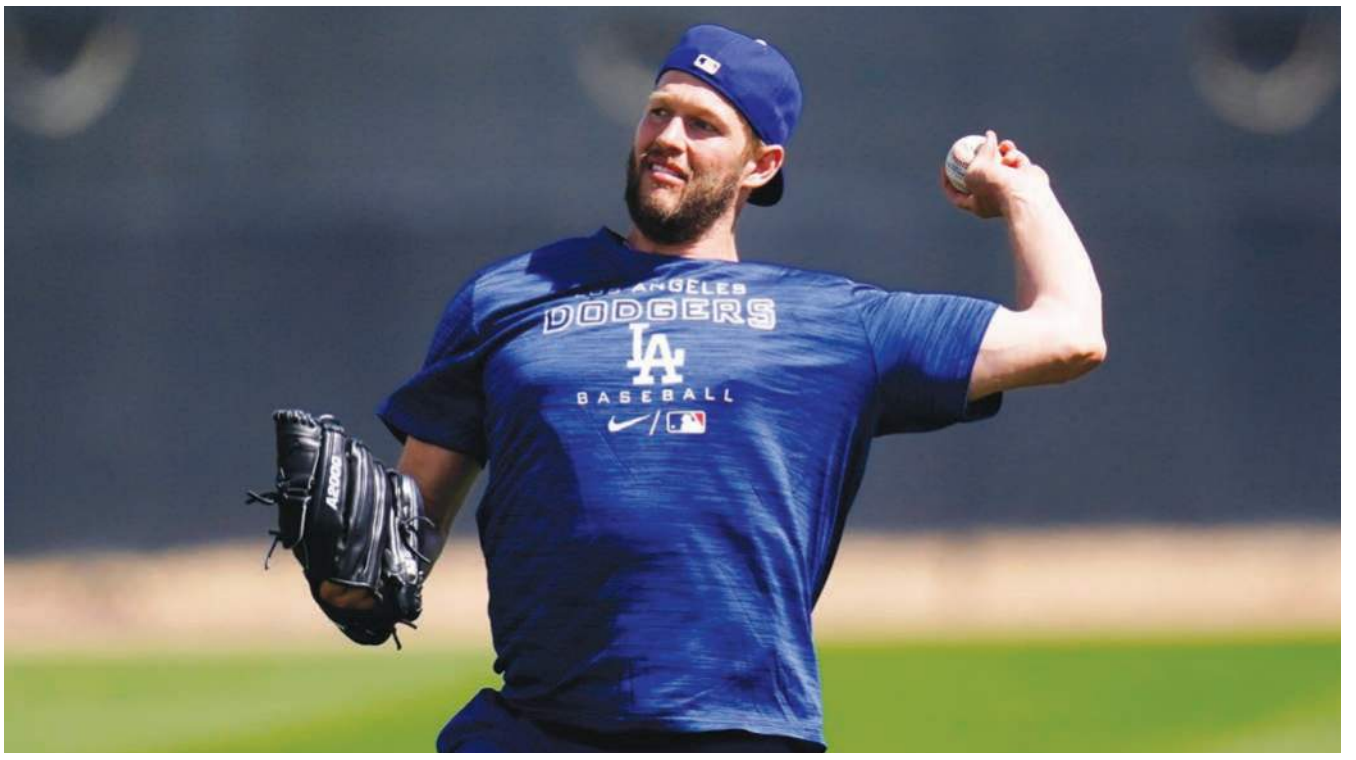
Kershaw's deal, finalized Sunday, calls for a $2.5 million signing bonus, payable within 15 days of the deal's approval by the commissioner's office. He gets a $14.5 million salary and would earn $1 million apiece for 16, 20, 22, 24 and 26 starts.

The 33-year-old left-hander was coming off a $93 million, three-year deal.

"We're a part of something special here, we know that," Kershaw said Sunday. "The playoffs are an expectation here, and the World Series is almost an expectation at this point. Not a lot of teams can say that, year in and year out."

"Sometimes it does not go your way and it hurts, but the chance to be there is worth it. … I wouldn't trade that for anything. You can't say that about a lot of organizations," he said. "You're even seeing it now; teams are trading guys, teams are getting rid of guys that they probably shouldn't if they really want to win. Overall, I think it is a special thing to be here."

Between free agency and the lockout, the three-time Cy Young Award winner was in limbo for more than three months. Yet the extra time was a blessing in disguise as Kershaw rested his forearm and his elbow until Jan. 1 and then began throwing.



AP

Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Clayton Kershaw warms up during a spring training baseball workout Sunday, March 13, 2022, in Phoenix.

"Without the distraction of figuring out where to play, it gave me time to figure it out," he said. "Once I got healthy, it was no secret, we were going to play in Texas, or stay here."

Dodgers president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman said the first person he called once the lockout ended was Kershaw.

"What Kersh has meant to this organization, to the city of Los Angeles, goes without talking about. Going into the offseason for us, it was our No. 1 priority," Friedman said.

Kershaw credited Friedman for not extending a qualifying offer to him, which gave him extra time to make his decision with his wife, Ellen, and their four children in mind.

"My kids are older and getting in school, the draw being home more, and keeping them in school is big, there's no secret to that," said Kershaw, who turns 34 on Saturday.

"Ellen was on board, she wanted to do this again. My son, Charlie, is 5 and the last couple years have been tough, so for him to get to be around the clubhouse again, and get to do some of those things, I'm excited. My 2-year-old is a terror right now, so I don't know if I'll bring him around, but Charlie's going to be really fun."

Another factor—albeit not a huge one, according to Kershaw—was the opportunity to spend all of his career with one team.

"I think it's really cool that people do that. … I think it is a very awesome thing," he said. "You think about the guys who have done that. It doesn't really happen recently as much any more, either."

When the lockout ended on Thursday, Kershaw informed Rangers general manager Chris Young that he was declining their offer.

"That was a hard phone call, to tell CY," said Kershaw, noting their close friendship. "But at the end of the day, I wanted to be here and win a World Series, and I think the Dodgers give me the best chance to do that, and I'm excited to be back."

After winning the World Series in 2020, Kershaw's injured forearm and elbow sidelined him for the 2021 playoffs, where the Dodgers fell two wins shy of advancing to the World Series. Kershaw avoided surgery and patiently amped up his regimen throughout January.

He was 10-8 with a 3.55 ERA in 22 starts last year.

"Every day I'd feel better, I wasn't as sore, I wasn't as sore," Kershaw said. "I started throwing off the mound a little bit more, and kept bouncing back, and just kind of one day, I realized, man, I'm healthy."

After a roar from the hundreds of fans attending spring training camp for the first time in two years, Kershaw threw with bullpen catcher Steve Cilladi as pitching coach Mark Prior looked on.

Kershaw backed up to approximately 80 feet before Cilladi squatted and they worked at pitching distance off the flat surface. He plans to throw against hitters on Monday, and believes he will be ready for the start of the season on April 7.

"I feel great," Kershaw said. "Obviously, you can't predict the future, but I didn't want to come back if I thought there was a chance I'd get hurt. Health is unpredictable at times, but I'd rather not play than get paid and be hurt at this point in my career, which is a blessing to be in that situation."

C Robinson Chirinos agrees to $900,000 deal with Orioles

BALTIMORE (AP)—Catcher Robinson Chirinos and the Baltimore Orioles agreed Monday to a $900,000, one-year contract.

The 37-year-old Chirinos returns to the American League after playing 45 games for the Chicago Cubs last season. He hit .227 with five home runs.

Chirinos played for the Mets and Rangers the previous year. He began his big league career with Tampa Bay in 2011, then played for Texas from 2013-2018 before spending 2019 with Houston.

Chirinos hit at least 17 homers in three straight seasons from 2017 to 2019, but he hasn't played regularly since then. He now joins a Baltimore team whose catcher of the future—former No. 1 overall draft pick Adley Rutschman—reached Triple-A last year.

TOWNS

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made seven 3-pointers. The Warriors shot 53.6% from the floor in snapping a three-game losing streak to Washington. Klay Thompson and Jordan Poole scored 20 apiece.

Green, who had been sidelined with a disk injury in his lower back, finished with six points, seven rebounds and six assists in 20 minutes.

Kristaps Porzingis scored 25 points and Kenatavious Caldwell-Pope had 19 in the Wizards' fourth straight loss, fifth of six and sixth in a row on the road.

NUGGETS 114, 76ERS 110

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Nikola Jokic had 22 points and 13 rebounds to lead Denver past Joel Embiid and Philadelphia in a battle of MVP contenders.

Embiid finished with 34 points and took a scary fall. Jeff Green clobbered Embiid on a drive to the basket with 3:13 left and the All-Star center landed on his tailbone. Embiid grabbed at his back but walked off the court on his own power. Green received a flagrant foul and Embiid went 1 of 2 from the free-throw line to cut Denver's lead to 107-106.

Denver rookie Bones Hyland then stole the show from the All-Star big men, burying his fourth 3 of the fourth quarter for a 110-108 lead that the Nuggets held on to. Hyland finished with 21 points.

BUCKS 117, JAZZ 111

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo had 30 points and 14 rebounds to help Milwaukee Bucks rally and then fend off Utah in the final seconds.

Jrue Holiday had 29 points and seven assists, and Khris Middleton scored 23 for Milwaukee.

Brook Lopez and George Hill both returned to the Bucks' lineup. Lopez had been sidelined with a back injury since the season opener and missed 67 games. Hill sat out 16 with neck soreness.

Donovan Mitchell led the Jazz with 29 points and eight assists. Mike Conley added 29 points and seven assists, and Rudy Gobert had 18 points and 14 rebounds.

CAVALIERS 120, CLIPPERS 111, OT

CLEVELAND (AP)—Rookie Evan Mobley scored a season-high 30 points and Darius Garland had 24 points and 13 assists as Cleveland beat Los Angeles.

Isaac Okoro added 20 points, including two free throws to open the extra period. Cleveland never trailed after that.

Ivica Zubac had 24 points, 14 rebounds and four assists, and Amir Coffey scored 19 for the Clippers, who had only nine players in uniform. Los Angeles shot 1 of 10 from the field in OT, with Nicholas Batum making a 3-pointer to pull within 110-109. Cleveland scored the final seven points.

RAPTORS 114, LAKERS 103

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Scottie Barnes scored 15 of his 21 points in the first quarter and Toronto held off a late rally by Los Angeles.

The Raptors led by 24 in the first as the Lakers were soundly defeated for the second consecutive night.

Gary Trent Jr. had 28 points and Pascal Siakam scored 27 for Toronto, which has won four straight—all on the road. Fred VanVleet returned after being held out Saturday at Denver to rest his right knee and had 11 points, seven rebounds and seven assists.

LeBron James had 30 points and nine rebounds for the Lakers, who have lost four of five—including 140-111 at Phoenix on Sunday. James was a game-time decision because of soreness in his left knee but ended up playing 40 minutes.

KINGS 112, BULLS 103

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—De'Aaron Fox had 34 points, six assists and six rebounds as Sacramento beat stumbling Chicago.

Domantas Sabonis added 22 points and seven rebounds after missing two games, and Sacramento ended a four-game skid with its third victory in 10 games. Davion Mitchell scored 16 and Donte DiVincenzo had 15.

Zach LaVine had 27 points and six assists for Chicago. Nikola Vucevic added 23 points and 10 rebounds, and DeMar DeRozan scored 21. The Bulls, who entered the night fourth in the East, have lost six of eight.

HAWKS 122, TRAIL BLAZERS 113

ATLANTA (AP)—Trae Young scored 21 of his 46 points in the third period and Atlanta rallied from a 15-point second-half deficit to beat Portland.

Young, who scored 47 points a night earlier in a win over Indiana, added 12 assists against the Blazers.

The Hawks won their third straight to reach .500 for the first time since Dec. 15.

Josh Hart led Portland with 31 points.

HORNETS 134, THUNDER 116

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Terry Rozier scored 30 points and Charlotte beat Oklahoma City.

Charlotte closed out a perfect two-game trip, rallying after falling behind by as many as 18 points in the second quarter. Miles Bridges had 27 points and six assists, and LaMelo Ball finished with 21 points and seven assists.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder with 32 points and eight rebounds, and Darius Bazley scored 25 points.

Oklahoma City lost its sixth consecutive game.

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Towns scores 60 as T-Wolves beat Spurs

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Karl-Anthony Towns had a team-record 60 points—the most scored in the NBA this season—and the Minnesota Timberwolves outlasted the San Antonio Spurs 149-139 on Monday night.

Towns shot 19 for 31 and grabbed 17 rebounds in surpassing his previous best of 56 points against Atlanta on March 28, 2018. Lakers star LeBron James and Hawks point guard Trae Young previously shared league-high honors this season with 56 points.

Minnesota's 7-foot All-Star capped his dazzling performance by draining a 3-pointer with 1:39 remaining, shortly after making one of two free throws to reach 57 points.

He became the first NBA player with 60 points and 17 rebounds in a game since Shaquille O'Neal had 61 and 23 for the Los Angeles Lakers on March 6, 2000.

San Antonio has lost two straight since Gregg Popovich earned his 1,336th career victory to become the winningest coach in NBA history. The Spurs have dropped seven of nine and are 2-3 during a seven-game homestand, their longest of the season.

Spurs forward Keldon Johnson had 34 points, Dejounte Murray added 30 points and 12 assists, and Lonnie Walker IV scored 22.

WARRIORS 126, WIZARDS 112

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Stephen Curry scored 47 points on his 34th birthday, Draymond Green returned from a 29-game absence to ignite the defense and Golden State beat Washington.

Curry shot 16 of 25 and

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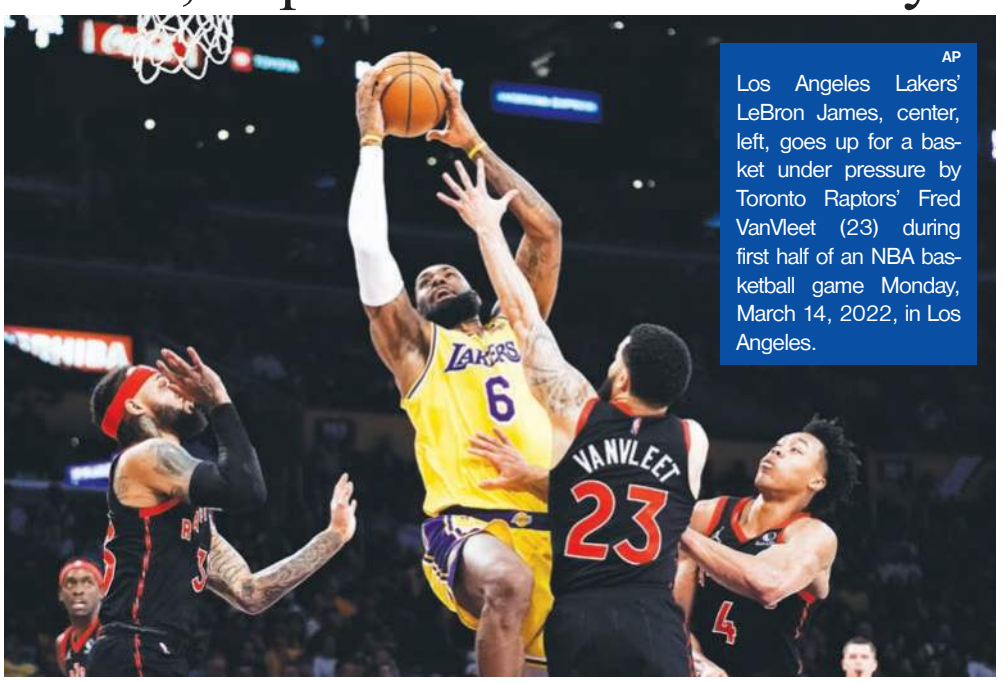
AP PHOTO/DARREN ABATE

Minnesota Timberwolves center Karl-Anthony Towns is doused by teammate D'Angelo Russell, rear, after an NBA basketball game against the San Antonio Spurs on Monday, March 14, 2022, in San Antonio.

Barnes, Raptors all over Lakers early in 114-103 win



AP

Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James, center, left, goes up for a basket under pressure by Toronto Raptors' Fred VanVleet (23) during first half of an NBA basketball game Monday, March 14, 2022, in Los Angeles.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Scottie Barnes scored 15 of his 21 points in the first quarter and the Toronto Raptors held off a late rally by the Los Angeles Lakers for a 114-103 victory Monday night.

The Raptors led by 24 in the first as the Lakers were soundly defeated for the second consecutive night.

"It was a great, great start," Toronto coach Nick Nurse said. "And then it was kind of weird from there, but it was good to get off to a good start like that."

Gary Trent Jr. had 28 points and Pascal Siakam scored 27 for Toronto, which has won four straight—all on the road. Fred VanVleet returned after being held out Saturday at Denver to rest his right knee and finished with 11 points, seven rebounds and seven assists.

LeBron James had 30 points and nine rebounds for Los Angeles, which has lost four of five—including 140-111 at Phoenix on Sunday. James was a game-time decision because of soreness in his left knee but ended up playing 40 minutes.

The Raptors piled on early against the floundering Lakers, scoring the first nine points on the way to a 33-12 lead after one. Los Angeles was 3 for 25 from the field and missed all 13 of its 3-pointers in the opening quarter. Avery Bradley had four points and was the only Lakers player with more than two in the period.

"Especially kind of early on, you get an open shot that everyone pretty much expects you to make it and you don't make it, it's kind of frustrating," Lakers guard Talen Horton-Tucker said.

Foul trouble was the only thing that slowed Barnes during an impressive first half. He scored 17 points on 8-of-11 shooting in 18 minutes before sitting down with his third foul.

NBA sending Warriors, Wizards to Japan for preseason games

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Stephen Curry is heading back to Japan, Rui Hachimura is going home and the NBA is planning to take another step toward normalcy.

The NBA announced Monday night that Golden State and Washington will be headed to Saitama, Japan, for the first two games of the 2022 preseason schedule. The Warriors and Wizards will play there on Sept. 30 and Oct. 2.

Those will be the first games for the NBA outside of North America since Jan. 24, 2020, when Milwaukee and Charlotte met in Paris for a regular-season game about six weeks before the global pandemic began.

The last time the NBA traveled overseas for preseason contests was October 2019, when Sacramento and Indiana played twice in Mumbai, Houston and Toronto played twice in Saitama and the Los Angeles Lakers and Brooklyn played a pair of games in China.

The league has a deal in place to bring games to Abu Dhabi for the first time this fall as well, though has yet to officially reveal which teams are heading there for preseason games.

"We've had the pleasure of building many impactful relationships throughout Japan, and some of our players, including Stephen Curry, have thoroughly enjoyed recent visits to Tokyo and the interactions they've shared with basketball fans who love the game," Warriors CEO and co-executive chairman Joe Lacob said.